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Backpacker Beware!

As hiker death toll mounts, rescue plan needed

By Xiao Rong

Beleary-eyed, she unzipped the tent door at 3.10 am. Outside in the violent rainstorm, seven men stood staring at her.

"They really surprised us when they came to rescue us that night," said one of the three women backpackers, who all requested anonymity.

As the three student backpackers stepped gingerly out of the tent, Liu Qi, a police officer in Huaibei town of Huairou District, noted two were missing shoes. A third had lost her backpack. Stormwater had swept away their first campsite, before the women moved to higher ground.

"We had planned to stay on the mountain and leave the next morning after which the storm might have stopped," said one of the women.

"But in fact, the millstone on which they camped was also vulnerable to the storm if the rain didn't stop," said Liu.

Totally unhurt, the three students were found after a four-hour search by a 60-man rescue team organized by local government forces and police in Tianchi Valley of Huairou district on Friday morning.

The sudden storm had come 8 pm the night before, causing mudslides and land collapses throughout the valley. Every night, a park ranger patrols the valley ensuring all the hikers have left. But the three women — who had earlier been advised not to camp — were missing, said Zhao Chunshan, manager of Tianchi Valley Scenic Spot.

"It was only through the help of local villagers that we finally succeeded in finding them in Shiren Mill, one of the former homes of the villagers destroyed in the flood of '68," Zhao told *Beijing Today*.

Er, thanks

The three young women, however, as reported by *Beijing Evening News*, did not appreciate the danger. Their first comments suggested the rescue was all an "exciting adventure".

"They surely had not realized the potential threat that a sudden rainstorm might bring," said Zhao.

"Many of the road signs in the valley disappeared during the storm, and one of the swimming pools — 25 meters long, 12 meters wide and 2 meters deep — was filled with giant rocks.

"The place where they sheltered was in similar peril as the storm continued."

Disasters

When *Beijing Today* contacted the three backpackers, they complained about reporting by local media that suggesting naiveté on their part.

"First, we are really thankful to those who strove to rescue us," said one of the women.

"Second, we did realize the possible danger and tried to contact our parents, but there was no signal on the mountain.

"And finally, we have been to the Tianchi Valley before. We were not totally unfamiliar with the local conditions, unlike some media reported."

For the three women, the unexpected attention has harmed other plans.

"Some reports really made us lose face," said the same woman. "Now our parents don't believe us and won't support our hiking activities anymore."

But while three competent campers may feel slighted by the media, they are at least alive to feel slighted by the media.

Another hiker, whose cyber name is "Xiao Bai", was less lucky on Saturday. He fell from a cliff in the Shenzhen suburbs during a mountaineering trip organized by a local website.



Stormy waters floated this empty Santana 500 meters downstream near Tianchi Valley, Huairou District.

Photo by Qu Liyan

Not long before this accident, on May 18, two experienced backpackers were found dead after a local governmental rescue team rescued 12 others lost in a sudden storm.

"It was only one of a series of tragedies caused by negligence of unprofessional cyberfriends or websites," said Li Shuping, director of outdoor activity department of Chinese Mountaineering Association.

"Five people have been reported dead in this kind of voluntary backpacking activities this year, not to mention those casualties that cannot be calculated."

Standards

An outdoor activity department was set up in March this year by the Chinese Mountaineering Association, aiming to strengthen management of the burgeoning industry.

There are today in China about 200 such commercial clubs or social organizations nationwide. With the increasing popularity of hiking and mountain adventures, casualties are also increasing, according to the association.

"Lack of awareness of potential dangers and inadequate professional skills are the main causes of most accidents.

"Some clubs or websites that initiate this kind of activities are even poorly organized, without advanced equipment and scientific management," said Yu Liangpu, secretary-general of the association.

The association is trying to establish a qualification system later this year to assess commercial clubs and organizations. Another system is also under way aimed at assessing, grading and qualifying guides and coaches, he said.

Most local clubs welcome the strengthening of industry management. "Safety is first about morality and justice. Then it depends on the self-discipline of the industry," said Zheng Lixin, manager of Shanshuixing Outdoor Ac-

tivity Club, one of Beijing's well-known clubs.

In Zheng's opinion, the growing number of casualties derives disproportionately from amateur — not professional — hikers.

"Most casualties come about through contrived negligence and a lack of common sense, which should have been avoidable," said Zheng.

"So from the point of view of running a long-term business, our clubs or cyber organizers must be prudent and responsible for the safety of their team members."

Zheng told *Beijing Today* some clubs in Beijing are considering setting up a fund to promote the operation of a rescue network.

"The system still awaits establishment in China. We cannot always rely on government forces in times of emergency.

"What the industry needs is professional and efficient aid teams to guarantee participants' safety and the healthy development of the industry."

Safety first

"Those who are still alive after several years of practice are mostly 'timid'. That's what we always say in the profession," joked Zheng.

Outdoor exploration is the kind of sport that demands abundant knowledge and scientific skills, he said.

"It's really tragic that so many beginners are driven by strong passion, not sober judgment," he said.

"One person succeeding in taking this route this one time doesn't necessarily mean that the next time he will get lucky again."

Yu Liangpu suggested backpackers prepare properly before signing up for outdoor activities. He especially urged more readiness among voluntary groups organized by cyberfriends.

"Even though the government is try-

ing to regulate the industry, sometimes it's more up to the enthusiasts themselves to promote awareness of self-protection by choosing proper teams," said he.

Reliable partners are sometimes more important than personal skills, he believes.

"We may warn backpackers not to camp in the mountain, but it's difficult to make them promise not to do this. Some of them may even explore far beyond the danger zones we have carefully marked out for them," said Zhao Chunshan, resort manager for Tianchi Valley.

Professionals have become increasingly worried about the carelessness of amateur enthusiasts.

"Those top professionals who have been threatened by real dangers are prudent and responsible for themselves.

"But sometimes those with a certain limited experience tend to be over-confident and ignore potential dangers," commented one cyberfriend online after the recent Shenzhen tragedy.

"Without the spirit of risk-taking, an outdoor activity is of little value, like a man without a soul. But why do so many of us ignore safety at the price of the deaths of friends that share the same dream with us?" wrote another enthusiast on the internet.

What he feared most is outdoor activities evolving into something like a suicidal sport, moving in the direction of self-destruction before the sport has an opportunity to regulate itself and attract others.

Li Shuping sounds a final note of caution. Danger is unavoidable, no matter how experienced or skilled the hiker.

"Compared with the casualties of natural disasters and transport accidents, however, the profession suffers a much lower death rate.

"So what we stress is improving your outdoor survival skills, while at the same time enjoying the great challenge and fun of the sport," he said.

Zheng Lixin expected a boom in outdoor activities next year, as safety concerns are increasingly addressed at official and grassroots levels.

"Our dream is one day to let everyone own their own sleeping bag," he said.

Committee Eyes Olympic Venues

An International Olympic Committee (IOC) delegation started a three-day inspection to Beijing Wednesday by visiting a design exhibition for the Olympic Green and Wukesong Sports and Cultural Complex, two of the major planned venues for the 2008 Games.

Headed by Hein Verbruggen, chairman of the IOC's Coordination Commission for the 2008 Olympics, the 23-member team gave their thumbs-up to varied designs.

Liu Jingmin, executive vice president of the Beijing Organizing Committee for the 2008 Olympic Games (BOCOG), briefed the IOC team on the initial construction plan for the Olympic Green.

"A new subway line will be built before 2008 that will run across the Olympic Green and links it to urban areas," said Liu, also Beijing vice mayor in charge of urban construction.

Traffic proved to be a major obstacle to success at past Olympic Games, but the IOC team did not express great concern about Beijing's capability to handle the issue after watching a documentary on the city's sophisticated and intelligent traffic management system.

"By 2008, about 30 to 40 percent of transportation will be made through subway and railway lines. This will greatly reduce the pressure on highway transportation," according to the short film. (Xinhua)

Festival Attracts Global Advisors

By Xiao Rong

A forum on strategies for development of Central Business Districts (CBD) worldwide will kick off at the Third Beijing Chaoyang International Business Festival, to be held on September 13 to 15.

Urban planners from metropolises from around the globe will be invited to share their experiences in constructing CBDs and offer suggestions for Beijing's own efforts.

The International Financial Service Exhibition will be another highlight of the Festival, focusing on six areas, "banking avenues", "investment plazas", "the insurance community", "interactive platforms", "project recommendations" and "consultation zones for overseas financial talents".

The activity's commercial activities will be bolstered by cultural programs. The Commercial English Speech TV Contest will be the first of its kind in the history of the Festival.

"The further development of the CBD will be the theme of this year's festival. Our ideal is for 'high-quality services to lead to an excellent CBD'," said Qiu Shuiping, secretary-general of the organizing committee of the Festival, at a press conference held yesterday.

The establishment of Beijing Central Business District Development & Construction Co. was also announced at the conference.

The company, focusing on infrastructure construction and bidding work for the CBD, is extending invitations for designs and investment for the 30 hectare core area of the business district.

The CBD will cover an area of about four square kilometers in Chaoyang District, stretching from Dongdaqiao Bridge in the west to Xidawang Road in the east, and with its southern boundary at the Tonghui River and northern limit at Chaoyang Road. The basic concept for the district was first put forward at the first Chaoyang International Business Festival held in 2000.

EDITOR: LIU FENG DESIGNER: PANG LEI

Policy Forum

Price Ceilings Prescribed for 24 Medicines

By Lily Li
Trying to stem a rising tide of consumer indignation with inflated pharmaceutical prices, ceilings have been set for the prices of 24 kinds of commonly prescribed medicines and were implemented on Monday, according to the Beijing Price Administration.

All 24 medicines on the list,

including Vitamin C injections, aspirin, acetaminophenol and Naproxen, are covered under the city's basic medical insurance plan. Half of the medicines are imports.

The price ceilings are more preventative than proactive, as the prices of these drugs at many local pharmacies are already under the new limits. For example, the maximum price for Bayer Aspirin from

Germany has been set at 19.8 yuan per box. However, Golden Elephant Pharmacy, Quanxin Pharmacy and Beijing Tongrentang Pharmacy currently sell the medicine for 17.8 yuan.

"In fact, we have maintained the market-set price of 17.8 yuan for Bayer Aspirin for a long time. We haven't changed price since the regulation was issued since it

is within bounds. Setting a price limit doesn't limit competition, and under the overall control of the bureau, market competition should normalize," said Li Huiying, an employee at the Beijing Tongrentang Chongwenmen Branch pharmacy.

"However, development of the domestic pharmaceutical industry must be accelerated, because

many consumers prefer expensive foreign medicines to cheaper domestic products," added Li.

Hu Hai, a secretary at the Sogo Department Store, said, "I prefer foreign medicines because they are more convenient to take and much more effective. However, they are too expensive. I would like to see the prices of foreign medicines cut drastically."

Electric Bikes Face Extinction by 2006

By Shan Jinliang

As a city famed for its fleets of millions of conventional bicycles, Beijing has decided not to develop electronic bicycles, but instead to expand its public transportation network, said Yu Chunquan, vice director of the city's traffic administration, last week

The decision spells the end for the thousands of electric bikes now in use in the city by December 31, 2005, and all such bicycles are to be kept off the roads from January 1, 2006. Bicycle users are required to apply for licenses from August 1 to 31, all of which will be valid only until 2006.

Despite their greater convenience and speed than conventional bikes, authorities believe the proliferation of electric bicycles would create chaos in the city's roads. Since Beijing's transportation system is a blend of motor vehicles and bicycles, said Yu, the fact that electric bikes move at speeds between those of cars and conventional bicycles could mean they would disturb

normal traffic flow. The bikes' speed of around 20 kilometers per hour and inefficient brakes make them threats to regular cyclists and pedestrians and can put riders in dangerous positions with automobiles on the road.

Moreover, the possible environmental damage caused by such bicycles goes against the city's policy of creating a "Green Olympics" in 2008. Investigations have shown 70 percent of the batteries used in electronic bikes are of the lead-acid type and 30 percent are cadmium-nickel type, meaning the bicycles will generate a large amount of pollution during their normally short lifespans.

The city's public transportation development plan calls for the further construction of subways and light rail lines and beefing up the number of cars in the city to 13 million. Yu said the city will build eight transportation hubs and extend Beijing's rail transportation system to a total length of 200 kilometers by 2008.

Medical Malpractice Appraisals Left to the Experts

By Shan Jinliang

While the regulation on handling cases of medical malpractice, planned to go into effect this September, looms on the horizon, a makeshift method for conducting and controlling malpractice appraisals was hashed out early this week by the Ministry of Health.

According to a top official from the ministry who requested anonymity, ideas from medical experts, medical associations and governmental departments were incorporated in the new method to make it more practical.

Under the method, a third party made up of a group of experts from medical associations must participate in the appraisal of malpractice cases. This third party can operate independently of any government department.

Both parties involved in malpractice cases will be allowed to choose the members of the third party from a database of experts, which is now being set up by the China Medical Association.

So far, over 2,000 experts have been recommended for registry in the database system. The first name list of designated medical professionals will come out in

mid-August.

Between four and ten experts should be appointed to each appraisal group. Only after an expert group is put together can a medical association be granted access to a patients' history under the watch of the two parties.

Every expert chosen by the two parties in a case will be given an individual code by the medical association involved, which will then use those codes to randomly select the participants in the third party group.

Any party involved in a medical malpractice investigation can request certain experts logged in the database to not be appointed to an appraisal group if they provide good reason.

Medical associations are obligated to ask experts to withdraw from appraisal groups when they are involved in the cases or are close relatives of those involved, or when they have interests in or other relations with the parties in a case that could affect the fairness of an appraisal.

The results of completed appraisals and related materials will be kept by the medical association for no less than 20 years.

spending and thereby fill gaps in tax payments.

Altogether, 40 million new invoices have been published in Beijing for distribution August and September, among which 10,000 carry cash awards. According to Mr. Yu, director of the invoice center of the Beijing Local Tax Bureau, and who declined to give his full name, "These invoices have a total of 3 million yuan in prizes, that range from 5,000 yuan to 100 yuan each." All cash prizes won from invoices are tax-exempt.

Holders of winning invoices can receive their prizes within 30 days of receiving the ticket by showing up at over 50 locations, including local tax bureau offices and designated banks and large restaurants, and producing their invoices and proper identification.



Assistant Minister of Public Security Meng Hongwei goes through the ins and outs of the new license plate system with reporters on Monday. Xinhua photo

Custom License Plates to Adorn Car Fenders Next Week

By Shan Jinliang

The Ministry of Public Security (MPS) announced Monday that auto buyers will be allowed to choose their favorite license plate numbers from August 12 to December 31. This pilot project represents the launch of the 2002 auto license plate system, which is being put into initial trial operation in Beijing, Tianjin, Hangzhou, Zhejiang province, and Shenzhen.

The move is intended to release some of the pressure caused by limited plates under the current auto licensing system, under which auto owners are appointed their plate numbers by local traffic administrations. The new policy could also prove effective in stemming illegal trade of plates with "lucky" numbers, such as 666 or 888.

At a press conference held in Beijing on Monday, Meng Hongwei, assistant minister of the MPS, said owners of large-sized

autos, small autos, motorcycles and light motorcycles will be given number-choosing rights. The new plates carry codes of three or six Arabic numerals and three English letters, all of which can be specially chosen by auto buyers.

Buyers in Tianjing, Hangzhou and Shenzhen are given two chances to choose their license numbers, and can choose three numerals each time. To ensure most people get what they want, the public security and traffic departments in these cities have developed a computerized number-searching system accessible through easy-to-use touch screens. The computers keep track of which numbers are registered or given up to confirm if requested codes are being used or not. When a car owner decides on a license number, the department will then punch out the plate and turn it over to its proud new holder.

With 36 million plate codes being made available for the

1.82 million vehicles in Beijing, local auto owners have strong chances of finding plates they like. The municipal traffic administration will allow drivers to choose their license numbers via the Internet in the near future.

The new plates should also make it easier for police officers to recognize forgeries, and the plate's anti-counterfeiting technology is expected to deal deft blows to vehicle smuggling and theft and reduce the frequency of hit-and-run cases.

To avoid potential chaos, the Beijing traffic administration has decided to not allow CHN (the short form of China) to be used in registered license plate codes.

During this pilot project, autos with old 1992-type license codes will not be switched over to the new plates. If the reform program proves successful in the four cities, the MPS plans to extend the auto license reform campaign nationwide.

State Grants Equal Status to Runners of Foreign Shows

By Shan Jinliang

The Ministry of Culture issued a regulation last week giving equal status to all domestic performance companies that run international shows.

"The old regulation stipulated only foreign-related organizations had the right to host for-profit foreign performances," said Liu Yuzhu, director of the ministry's marketing department. "There was only one company allowed to run such performances in each province, autonomous region or municipality, and those companies had to be state-owned."

"In the past, private companies could only earn qualification by purchasing approval certificates," said Liu, "which added to the costs of holding performances and led to higher admission prices."

The regulation allows any organization with sufficient capital and professional performers to apply to establish for-profit performance troupes, sites and agencies.

The regulation, which will go into effect on October 1, also prescribes that government departments will no longer be involved in performances related to public welfare activities, charitable activities and festivals.

West Light Rail To Take Trial Run Next Month

By Xue Ming

The west line of the Beijing light rail system will enter trial operation on September 28 as scheduled, while the full operation of the light rail system has been postponed from the end of this year to January 28 next year.

The overall cost of the system is expected to reach 5.864 billion yuan (approximately \$708 million). The west line starts at Xizhimen, runs north through Xueyuan Road, Dazhongsì (the Great Bell Temple), Tsinghua University, reaching its final stop at Huilongguan West. The east line heads from Huilongguan East south through the Wangjing Development Area, ending at the Dongzhimen underground bus station. There are 17 stations on the two lines, which connect to the no. 2 subway line at Dongzhimen station and Beiyuan station.

Zhongguancun IT Fest Gearing Up

By Shan Jinliang

In an attempt to promote the internationalization of the Zhongguancun science park, the Haidian District government and the park's administrative committee announced on Tuesday that the fifth Zhongguancun IT Festival will run from September 6 to 11.

Under the theme of investment facilitation, the festival will highlight around 100 scientific projects and innovative products. The festival will be divided into four major sections: investment attraction, exhibitions, forums and exchanges.

One highlight of the event will be the high-level forum between Zhongguancun and the Shanghai Pudong Development Zone, another major domestic science park. Outside of the forum, the two sides will also release the Zhongguancun & Pudong 21st Century Joint Declaration and hold a meeting on personnel information release and recruitment, said Wu Luyu, director of the science department of the Haidian District government.

On September 9, Chinese software companies and officials will exchange their experiences with counterparts from Bangalore, India, and companies from Chinese mainland and Taiwan province will hold a seminar on "IT Industry Integration and Marketing Strategies."

Diocese Building Up for Full-scale Facelift

By Shan Jinliang

The 100-year old Beijing Xishiku Church Diocese Building is scheduled to undergo a full-scale restoration project starting this September, with the goal of making the office a center for Chinese Catholics, according to an announcement made by the Beijing Bureau of Religious Affairs last week.

The Beijing Catholic diocese has been centered in the Beijing South Cathedral in Xuanwumen since 1950, but will move to the Beijing Xishiku Church (its former name North Church) when its face-lift is finished.

"This is an exciting thing for China's five million Catholics," said Fu Tieshan, chairman of the Chinese Patriotic Catholic Association and a Catholic Bishop. "The Diocese Building will continue to have a leading role in China's Catholic activities."

"The Diocese Building, made up of four *siheyuan* (courtyard houses) has been occupied by the Beijing 39th Middle School for half a century," said Hua Qian, religious section chief of the city Bureau of Religious Affairs, "but the school will be moved to a new facility this September." Having gone years without repair, the inner parts of the complex are in poor condition, and the whole restoration project should take around one year to complete, he added.

Ji Wenyan, deputy director of the bureau, said the municipal government has poured 60 million yuan into construction of the school's new campus and another 20 million yuan will be spent on the refurbishing of the diocese office complex.



The 39th Middle School will clear out of this space to make way for the Diocese Building in September. Photo by Chen Shuyi

Outside of the Beijing Xishiku Cathedral Church Diocese Building, the city will spend another 31 million yuan on restoring the South Catholic Church, East Catholic Church, Dongjiaominxiang Catholic Church, Christian Chongwenmen Church and the Zhushikou Church. "Beijing has spent 120 million yuan on emptying and restoring all its religious sites in the past several years," said Ji.

The Beijing Xishiku Catholic Church has been called the "royal church" since its construction in 1703. The Church closed during the ten years of the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976), in which all religious activities were banned, and reopened in 1985. Now nearly 500 people show up to attend mass at the church every day.

SINA Achieves Record Revenue of \$8.6 Million

By Yang Xiao

Chinese portal SINA announced its financial results for the fiscal year ending June 30 Wednesday. Net revenues were \$28.5 million, compared to \$26.7 million for the previous year. On a GAAP basis, net loss was \$16.1 million, an improvement of 56% from a net loss of \$36.4 million for the previous year.

As of June 30, 2002, the total balance of SINA's cash, cash equivalents and short-term investments was \$93.2 million, representing a decrease of \$0.4 million from the previous quarter. With strong revenue growth and improved gross margins, SINA achieved positive operating cash flow for the first time with cash flow from operations amounting to \$0.4 million for the quarter ended June 30, 2002.

"We're positioning SINA to leverage our core competence in brand, technology and content into high growth areas as well as making SINA more responsive to regional needs and differences," said CEO Daniel Mao. "Particularly, by incorporating Taiwan into our East China operations center and Hong Kong into our South China operations center, we will better serve many of our key clients and partners in Taiwan and Hong Kong who themselves have become cross-regional enterprises."

Shell Launches Major Overseas Investment Project

The Royal-Dutch / Shell Group and China National Offshore Oil Corporation (CNOOC) will jointly begin construction of a petrochemical project in Huizhou city of south China's Guangdong Province in September sources said Wednesday.

The US \$4.35 billion project, the largest Sino-foreign joint project in the country and one of the leading petrochemical projects in the world, is expected to begin operations in 2005, producing 800,000 tons of ethylene and more than 2.3 million tons of chemicals and by-products annually. Sales are expected to reach \$1.7 billion annually.

CNOOC and Shell signed a contract for the joint venture in 2000 after a marathon 12-year negotiation. Shell holds 50 percent of the project's total shares, with the remaining 50 percent held by CNOOC, Guangdong Province and Huizhou city.

Analysts estimate the project will bring development opportunities to down-stream industries with a potential value of more than 100 billion yuan.

Inspired by the project, some international giants based in the United States, Japan and France have reportedly chosen Huizhou as the venue for their new overseas investment projects.

Legend Reports 15.3 Percent Profit Increase

Legend Wednesday announced a US \$34 million profit for the first quarter of the 2002-03 fiscal year, a 15.3 percent increase over the same period last year.

Yang Yuanqing, President and CEO, has attributed the rise to increased sales of servers, pocket PCs and PDAs.

The unit shipment of servers rose 58 percent in the first quarter from a year earlier, while the unit shipment of pocket PCs and PDAs grew 48 percent.

Yang said that during the second quarter ending in June, China's PC market developed steadily while the competitive environment eased a little compared with the same period last year.

Private Automakers Merge Amid Restructuring Wave

Jeely Group, China's largest private automaker, announced Monday it had purchased the sedan car arm of Shanghai JMStar Group, another privately-owned auto manufacturer.

According to their agreement, Jeely Group will keep focusing on the sedan car market, while JMStar will produce motorcycles, buses and trucks.

"Expansion through restructuring is the only way for small, privately-run automakers to survive the intense competition brought about by transnational firms flocking into the Chinese market," said Xu Gang, the newly-appointed executive director of Jeely Group.

China presently has over 100 automakers, most of which are expected to carry out strategic restructuring in order to survive the upcoming competition with their foreign rivals, insiders say.

(Xinhua)

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

China Telecom IPO This Autumn?

By James Young

China's biggest fixed-line operator, China Telecom, delivered applications for US and Hong Kong IPOs last week, while Wall Street stocks have hit their lowest levels in years and telecom valuations decrease.

Insider bankers in Hong Kong estimate China Telecom could raise as much as US \$2.4 - 4 billion in an October IPO. At \$4 billion, a China Telecom IPO would indeed be big, although significantly short of the \$6 billion deal talked of late last year or the gargantuan \$10 billion offering that had once tantalized bankers. "The US Securities and Exchange Commission comments usually come seven or eight weeks after the filing, and the Hong Kong Exchange should return feedback in three or four weeks," a source close to the China Telecom IPO said last Friday.

Lead underwriters of the IPO are Merrill Lynch, Morgan Stanley, and China International Capital Corp., a joint venture between Morgan Stanley and China Construction Bank. The estimate fee for this IPO could amount to \$300 million. Investment banking sources that were not identified said they hope the markets will stabilize by the time the deal gets regulatory approvals.

The IPO, almost two years in the making, will be the second billion-dollar-plus stock sale in Hong Kong this year, coming hard on the heels of that of the Bank of China (Hong Kong). It will offer investors exposure to growth in fixed-line networks in China's richest southern provinces of Guangdong, Zhejiang, Jiangsu as well as Shanghai.

China is the world's largest cellular market and second largest fixed line market, but penetration rates remain low. The combined penetration rate at the end of this year is forecast to reach just

15 percent.

Opportunities for foreign investment in the telecom sector are increasing following China's entry to the WTO. Under the terms of the agreement, China must allow 25 percent foreign investment, with the level increasing to between 49 and 51 percent over a three to five year period. The WTO agreement also means that the Chinese telecom industry must comply with international norms. There will be a more transparent, codified regulatory regime under which, at least in theory, investment from foreign companies will be treated no differently to that from national companies.

Meanwhile, foreign investors have been given the opportunity to participate in this lucrative market. The first major deal was the listing of China Telecom Hong Kong (which at the time owned two mobile operating companies in Zhejiang and Guangdong), raising US \$4.2 billion in October 1997. In June 2000, China Unicom raised \$5.6 billion from its IPO on the Hong Kong and New York stock exchanges. According to the Ministry of Information Industry (MII), China has received over \$20 billion of international investment in the telecom industry since 1994.

China Telecom has been preparing for an IPO for years. The most significant move was the split in May into a two carriers; one of which inherited the China Telecom name and networks in 21 southern provinces and China Unicom, covering the north. The geographical competition image was called to encourage overseas investors. At the same time China Telecom has been seeking to obtain a mobile telecom license from the MII that will further stimulate investors' confidence. Meanwhile the reduction of the 530,000-strong workforce by 200,000 has made it leaner, more streamlined, and cer-



Locals in Wuhan visit a China Telecom promotional exhibition. The company, which has acquired the southern half of the domestic market, is concentrating on promoting its new brand in the north

Photos by photocomme

tainly more attractive to investors.

Despite the intense preparation for the IPO, many in the industry believe the timing is wrong. Worldcom's \$100 billion bankruptcy has severely disrupted the industry environment. The share

prices of China's two mobile telecom service providers, China Mobile and China Unicom, decreased 20-30 percent in the wake of the Worldcom case. Domestic issues are also factors. According to the National Bureau of Statistics, the Chinese telecom indus-

try only grew by 12 percent last year, a significantly slower growth rate than the previous two years.

At this stage, China Telecom still keeps silent about the plan to list and has not yet revealed how it would spend the proceeds of a share listing.

AUTO INDUSTRY

Fuyao Blasts North America Trade Protectionism

By Zhao Yijiang

The Canada Customs and Revenue Agency (CCRA) announced on July 31 that it would only impose a weighted average tariff rate of 24 percent on the Fujian Fuyao Glass Industry Group (SSE:600660), compared with a 57 percent duty imposed in a preliminary decision on May 2. Although the final decision will not be made until the end of this month, after the Canadian International Trade Tribunal (CITT) determines whether the dumping has harmed Canadian producers, the announcement was still considered a breakthrough in China's fight against anti-dumping charges.

The glass dispute, following an investigation initiated by PPG Canada, is the latest example of Fuyao Group flexing its muscles in the global trade arena following China's accession to the World Trade Organization last December.

Early in February, the US Department of Commerce (DOC) ruled in favor of imposing anti-dumping duties of 11.8 percent on Fuyao's US shipments of auto replacement glass (ARG) windshields after a year-long investigation. The department rejected Fuyao's costings for materials imported from Indonesia, Thailand and South Korea because of suspicions that the exporters of the materials in those countries get subsidies. But the ruling seemed to lack solid ground. "It is ridiculous for the DOC to say there are subsidies in those countries, so Fuyao should prove that none of the products it uses are subsidized," said Bruce Mitchell, the US lawyer for Fuyao.

According to the DOC, China ex-



A worker in Fuyao's Chongqing workshop examines a windshield.

ported 1.8 million ARG windshields to the US last year worth \$52.4 million. Industry sources said Fuyao probably accounts for around 1 million units. As the largest exporter of ARG windshields to the US, the decision would cause serious damage to Fuyao. "It is critical for us to win the case," said Cao Dewang, president of Fuyao Glass. The group appealed in April to the US Court of International Trade in New York. The federal district court specializes in appeals on anti-dumping decisions by the DOC.

It seems that Fuyao will have better opportunities to win its antidumping case in Canada. Not long after the CCRA announced their decision, the Montreal windshield manufacturer, Lamiver wrote to their customers saying they no longer support PPG. In

the letter, Michael Sartain, the company president wrote, "When we were first approached and asked to support this complaint by PPG, we believed that a positive result would benefit all domestic manufacturers. We now feel that the real beneficiary of this anti-dumping action will be PPG's own distribution centers and not the domestic manufacturers as we had originally thought."

Many independent distributors also stood up to defend the Chinese manufacturers. Over the last few years, increased purchases of Chinese products by many independent distributors did not come at the expense of PPG, since PPG would not sell to them long before they ever bought Chinese windshields. PPG wants to limit the supply of its product that goes out into the

marketplace and comes back to compete against them at the distribution and retail level.

"We have been forced to look elsewhere for product by the domestic industry's practices. We see this as one of the main reasons why imports from China have grown. The domestic producers are doing their level best to put the independent glass distributor out of business by engaging in what we feel are discriminatory pricing practices at the distribution channel," claimed Kip Wiley, of American Glass Distributors of Texas.

"I found that the Chinese product is equal to the products that I've been importing from these other countries in terms of quality. The way the Chinese distribute is much more efficient than some of domestic manufacturers distribute," said Daryl Anderson, who have been in the auto glass business for over 25 years.

The recent anti-dumping case is just the latest tactic to eliminate competition from the independent glass business and pool the domestic producers' control over the entire distribution chain, analysts said. So companies like Fuyao need to clarify facts in order to protect their legitimate rights. The courage has become more important with many countries fearing China's massive low-cost labor force and wanting to protect their own markets.

"We do not want to be a company that is famous for being unfairly treated in the Chinese history of imports and exports. We do not want to be blamed by future generations," said Cao.

Fuyao Glass closed at 9.45 yuan Thursday on the Shenzhen Stock Exchange, a decrease of 0.08 yuan.

Financial Sector Slated For Prominence in Next Round of Overseas Investment

By Zhao Hongyi

The national government says it is moving to encourage overseas investment in the domestic financial sector, as the country is becoming more sophisticated in industrial manufacturing and badly needs a strong financial service sector to support the sustainable development of the economy.

Gao Yan, spokeswoman for the Ministry of Foreign Trade and Economic Cooperation, said at a press conference held earlier this week in Beijing that the accounting and commercial distribution sectors will be given priority in the further opening-up campaign in the second half of this year.

She added that the government has re-evaluated and amended a number of laws and regulations related to overseas investment in the fields of legal services, telecommunications, financial services, insurance, marine transportation, commercial distri-

bution, sales of audio and video products, as well as travel agency services, since China entered the World Trade Organization (WTO) last December.

According to Gao, China has approved nine China-foreign joint accounting service agencies, six direct subsidiaries and four partners of foreign accounting firms, and is considering allowing registered overseas accounting professionals and agencies direct access to the domestic market.

“Commercial merchandising is the second sector at the top of the list for further opening up,” said Gao.

Meanwhile, Gan Zhihe, deputy secretary general of the State Economic and Trade Planning Commission, made it clearer that the financial arena will be the main target for foreign capital when he announced this week in Beijing that China will shift the fields of priority in attracting overseas investment from industrial sectors to the

financial and service sectors, such as financial services, accounting, legal services, asset evaluation and management, securities, insurance, banking and other market intermediary service sectors.

Gan said China has seen an increase of transnational acquisitions and stock share transfers as new means of market access, particularly among the multinational companies lining up to acquire more of China's state-owned enterprises.

Gao Yan said China has fulfilled its commitments for its entry to the WTO, opening the Beijing and Tianjin markets to overseas insurers ahead of the schedule and approving 14 China-foreign joint medical institutions, 12 joint lawyer offices, one joint travel agency, and ten joint merchandising entities nationwide.

In the securities business sector, the China Securities Regulatory Commission released the administrative regulations for foreign

investment in the country's fund management and securities business sectors in June, which went into effect on July 1.

Rumors say the preferential treatments extended to foreign funded enterprises will be eliminated in the near future, following the country's WTO entry. Gao added China will do its best to maintain the stability, coherence and transparency of its laws, regulations and policies. In the long term, China will create a fair, free and disciplined market environment for all investors, both overseas and domestic.

China has seen a steadily increasing of overseas investment absorption. Total contractual overseas capital inflow in the first six months of this year reached \$43.99 billion, an increase of 31.5 percent from the same period of last year, and actual input reached \$24.58 billion, up 18.7 percent, according to figures provided by Gao.

Guotai Jun'an Allianz Seeks OK for Market Entrance

By A Yi

Guotai Jun'an Allianz Fund Management, the first fund management company set up with foreign capital in China, submitted an application to begin business operations with the China Security Regulatory Commission (CSRC) this week.

The joint venture was established by Germany's Allianz AG in mid-July, through its asset management division Allianz Dresdner Asset Management, and China's Guotai Jun'an Securities, one of the country's top five securities houses.

China's regulations requires CSRC to decide whether or not to give the green light to the joint venture's business operation within the next three months.

“The authorities have no reason to object to our request, since we are the first joint venture in the sector,” said an officer at the Allianz Beijing office who declined to give his name. “It takes us another month after the approval to start business.”

Market analysts expect the joint venture to officially start operations in China by the beginning of next year.

Eleven 100-percent domestically owned fund management companies operating in the domestic market, most of which are derived from securities transaction companies. These fund management companies offer five open-ended funds and 49 close-ended funds, of which 24 are transacted on the Shanghai Stock Exchange and 25 on the Shenzhen Stock Exchanges.

Sources from the CSRC say at least seven funds are discussing joint businesses with foreign partners, including the International Financial Corporation, BNP Paribas Asset Management, UBS AG from Switzerland, the Bank of Montreal from Canada, and JP Morgan of the US.

China's long-awaited Securities Investment Fund Law, the first draft of which was launched in 1999, is likely to come out within the year. The law has been amended a dozen times and will go in front of the National People's Congress for final discussion and voting this month.

Fund management is a field with clear potential. China has over 10 trillion yuan in state-owned fixed assets and another 10 trillion yuan of circulating assets. Private deposits in banks total 8 trillion yuan and the domestic stock market has an overall market value of 2 trillion yuan. The country has another 2 trillion yuan of state and commercial bonds. This figures bring the total sum of nationwide assets to nearly 60 trillion yuan, approximately \$7.25 trillion.



Luxurious Swisswatch Searching Market in Beijing

Created by Jehan-Jacques Blancpain in 1735, Switzerland-based Blancpain calls itself the world's oldest watch brand. Its hand-made watches made a splash in Beijing on August 6 with an exhibition of Blancpain series 1735 timepieces at the St. Regis Beijing Hotel.

According to Blancpain, only three Swiss watchmakers in the world are trained to manufacture the watches. One of its hand-crafted watches takes approximately 18 months to produce and their prices start at \$770,000.

(Xinhua Photo / Yu Xiaoping)



China's gold consumption weighed at 213.2 tons last year, according to the figures from China's National Gold Bureau. The country keeps its domestic buying and selling prices of 99.99 percent pure gold intact though the world market price is fluctuating recently. The buying price of 99.99 pure gold remains at 82.33 yuan per gram, while the selling price stays at 83.97 yuan per gram.

Photo by Zhuang Jian

Country Striving to Spark Gold Rush

By Zhao Hongyi

Yigjiaci Wu, a small village in Jiangxi province, has drawn an inordinate amount of attention in the past week, as its local government, for the first time ever in China, is gearing up to hold an auction for the exploring rights of a small gold mine in the village.

The auction was first slated for August 8, but later postponed to August 18.

Liu Chunmao, manager of the Nanchang Mining Rights Transaction Center, the auctioneer, said, “we have to give fair opportunities to all parties interested in bidding.”

This bit of news is only one of several recent developments that reflect a distinct opening of the domestic gold mining industry, once considered top secret and the nation's most sensitive industry.

Last month in Southwest China's Guizhou province, the provincial government and the local authority of Qinxinan signed an agreement with Canada-based Asia Pacific Energy Corp. (APEC) for the exploration of the heavy gold deposits at Puanni Bao, estimated to total around 113 tons. In upholding its end of the bargain, APEC will invest \$40 million in technology and equipment for the exploration. Annual gold production at the mine is expected to reach around 100,000 ounces, with a value of 240 million yuan.

China has massive gold deposits just waiting to be explored and exploited. Last year, the country produced 181.83 tons of gold, making it the world's fourth-largest gold producer, but still put-

ting it far behind global No. 1 South Africa, which produced 1,000 tons. The central government plans to increase nationwide gold output by five percent annually to reach a total output of 1,000 tons during the Tenth Five-Year Plan (2001-2005).

Moreover, the domestic gold exploration and mining industry is held back by low efficiency rates and out-of-date facilities. China has over 1,300 licensed gold exploring enterprises that employ nearly 350,000 people. However, the average annual output per head is less than 900 grams. Sustainable growth in the industry can only be realized by upgrading technology and improving and setting up new facilities.

The government now looks at rigorously licensing exploration and mining and introducing overseas investment and technology as the two major tools for reorganizing the industry.

Last month, China established a partnership with South Africa for the detection, exploration and refining of gold in the country. In November of last year, the Shanghai Gold Exchange started pilot operation, providing a domestic forum for international gold trade.

At the meeting with his South African counterparts last month, Cheng Fumin, director general of the National Gold Bureau under the State Economic and Trade Commission, said, “The door has opened, though only a little bit. But as always happens in this country's reform processes, once the door is opened, it can never be closed again.”

Support Services at Vanguard of IT Market Growth

By A Yi

While the global IT industry and market went through painful shrinkages last year, China's IT industry, particularly the software and supporting service markets, is showing promising signs of steady future growth, according to the China Center of Information Development Consulting (CCID Consulting).

CCID Consulting operates directly under the central government watching over the country's IT industry and market, and is the most authoritative domestic IT market analyst.

In the two market analysis

reports the company released, namely the “2001-2002 Annual Research Reports on China's IT Market” and “Topic Research Reports on IT Market Trends in 2002”, CCID outlined that in China, the rate of growth of IT hardware sales has slowed, while software and services sales have accelerated.

The two reports say the domestic IT market grew 16.4 percent in 2001. Software sales accounted for 27 percent of all market transactions, while service sales reached 40.66 billion yuan.

In the first half of this year, IT ser-

vice product sales in China reached 21.36 billion yuan, up 25.6 percent from the same period of last year, much higher than the 15.8 percent increase in the hardware market.

CCID Consulting expects the domestic IT service market to reach a total value of 50.1 billion yuan this year and 138.4 billion yuan by 2006, with an annual growth rate of around 28.1 percent.

“The rapid growth of the IT service market has become crucial to the domestic IT market as a whole,” according to CCID Consulting's reports.

China Becomes World's Top Iron, Steel Importer

China imported 11.72 million tons of steel in the first six months of this year, according to the China Iron and Steel Association, representing an increase of 37.5 percent from the same period of last year and making the country the world's largest iron and steel importer.

The former holder of that title, the US, imported 10.98 million tons of iron and steel during the same period.

“The global industry expected China to become the largest importer by the end of this year, but those predictions came true six months before anticipated,” said Huang Jindou, secretary general of China Iron and Steel Association.

According to Huang, China had also been the global leading in iron and steel imports from 1994 to 1996.

World Software Developer to Hold Fair

Computer Associates (CA), one of the leading software developers and dealers in the world, announced this week that it will hold its annual technical fair, CAEXPO2002, in Beijing on August 30.

CA lists China at the top of its business growth and holds the annual fair in a different Chinese city every year. The fair provides a forum for the introduction of the latest IT information and software products, particularly those related to e-commerce, to Chinese customers. IT seminars, workshops and panel discussions will make up the main content of the event.

More information about the fair can be found at the company's website, www.ca.com.cn.

Samsung Life Eyeing Domestic Market

Samsung Life from South Korea is expected to launch its first life insurance joint venture in China in the near future, according to sources from Samsung group in Beijing.

Samsung group's property insurer, Samsung Fire & Marine Insurance, opened a branch in Shanghai in early April last year.

The life insurance joint venture is likely to be established in Shenzhen, but the group's office in Beijing declined to provide the local partner's name and the exact time the new company will be launched.

If all goes as planned, Samsung Life will be the first Asian life insurer to start local business in the Chinese market.

Sumitomo, HiSense to Sell Appliances in Japan

Sumitomo Corporation, one of Japan's largest trade conglomerates, signed an agreement with China's HiSense group to sell the Chinese appliance maker's products in the Japanese market.

HiSense group is one of China's largest home electric appliance producers and has extended its product range into the IT hardware and PC fields in recent years. Before signing this agreement, HiSense entered the American and European markets through cooperation with Sumitomo's sales channels in the two continents.

In the agreement, Sumitomo also promised to help HiSense to establish chain stores to sell its latest luxury digital home appliances in China.

(Xiao Ma)

Trial Opens Debate about Deadly Jelly

By Sun Ming

A grieving father has blasted the Beijing snack company he blames for the death of his 8-year-old boy as trial began at Haidian District People's Court on Monday last week.



Snack jelly

Photo by Cui Hao

"My son suddenly toppled to the ground in the doorway and appeared to be dying," said Yao Huiwei (pseudonym), a worker from Zhejiang.

"I assumed he'd been involved in some kind of traffic accident, but at hospital, a doctor sucked a small jelly out from his throat with a straw."

Yao Jie died on his way to Xiyuan Chinese Medical Hospital on February 18 this year. The death certificate reports "foreign matter" in the windpipe caused Yao to choke to death.

Yao's father seeks 300,000 yuan from both the company

and the Guangzhou manufacturer for failing to provide a warning label.

"I never expected a little jelly to become a killer," he said.

Xizhilang jelly, a popular brand in China, carries the red-letter warning: "Please don't permit elderly and children to swallow jelly quickly."

CCTV show *Half an Hour's Economy* of July 31 revealed nationwide there have been more than 30 jelly deaths in three years, including a 1-year-old girl in Hubei on January 28, a 1-year-old girl in Taiyuan, Shanxi on February 9 and a 2-year-old boy on March 7.

Defending the two companies, Wei Ming said the blame belonged to the parents, not the jelly.

"Children can also choke to death on peanuts. So should the farmer who planted the peanuts also be punished?"

Less than 50 percent of jelly on the market of Beijing carry warnings on the packaging.

"The shape of most of the jelly looks like a plug," said Wang Dongfang, a Beijing Children Hospital doctor told a CCTV reporter.

The case continues. Judgment will be passed in September.

Comeback Pop Starlet Admits to Love Affair

By Sun Ming

The Guangxi pop starlet who once sang, "Wo Bu Xiang Shuo," (I Don't Want to Speak) finally confessed to her controversial love affair on Saturday.

Yang Yuying had retired from the music industry in 1997, but her name resurfaced two years later as the girlfriend of Lai Wenfeng, apparently connected to the 50 billion yuan Xiamen smuggling scandal.

"It was a pure love," Yang told Hong Kong Phoenix TV interviewer Lu Yu. "I once loved Lai Wenfeng very much, not as some people said, that I only loved him for his money."

A 2 million yuan Porsche, an alleged gift to Yang, proved a popular draw at the exhibition erected by Xiamen authorities after the show-piece trial.

Lai Wenfeng, former general manager of a branch of Yuanhua Group in Hong Kong, is the nephew of principal smuggler Lai Changxing, who escaped to Canada in 1999 and is still listed as wanted by Chinese government. Lai's fate has not been reported in China.

"I was shocked when I first read such damaging articles in the media in 1999," said 31-year-old Yang. "How could I have a relationship with the scandal? I had left Lai Wenfeng in 1997."

Tomorrow, six days after the interview, Yang will hold her first solo concert in Beijing.

"Yang didn't ask us to inform her of the interview questions in advance. We thought that the interview



Yang Yuying

perhaps couldn't avoid the sensitive topic," Fan Qingyuan, director of *Lu Yu's Appointment*, told *Beijing Youth Daily*.

"It was first love," Yang told Lu in a Sanlitun bar. "We met in 1994, when I was 24 and Lai was 22. We separated because our dispositions were not suited."

"There was never a marriage contract between us, as mentioned in some articles."

Clever Policeman Foils Gang of Wife-kidnappers

By Chen Ying/Lu Guohong

A shrewd hunch and a scrap of paper led police to capture a wife-kidnapping gang on Saturday last week.

Officer Li Zhongxiang noticed a man looking nervous on his patrol of the first floor of Beijing West Train Station on last Sunday morning. An identity check revealed the man as Song Yuming, 45, a farmer from Sanchakou Village of Longhua County of Hebei Province. He had no criminal record, but searching through his articles, Li grew suspicious about a piece of paper in Song's telephone book.

One part read: "I come to Zhengjiagou Village of Maojingbei Town of Longhua County of Hebei Province voluntarily."

"I want to marry Zheng Zhong voluntarily. There is absolutely no reason for concern."

The signature, sealed with a red fingerprint, was by a 20-year-old illiterate woman Jiang Hanmei, of Yunnan Province. Li suspected kidnapping.

Under police interrogation, Song confessed. He said in the middle of July he and four accomplices had kidnapped three women, one 20 years old and two others 17-years-old, from Yunnan Province. They tricked them into writing contracts, and then sold them on to the farmers in Longhua County of Hebei Province for 20,000 yuan each.

The four men and his nephew Ou Lifeng — who also wanted to buy a wife — were on the T5 train to Nanning, Guangxi. He had come to say goodbye.

Police seized the five and found papers recording the women's personal information and moneys totaling about 50,000 yuan.

The six suspects have been sent to Longhua County, Hebei Province for further investigation. Local police promised they would rescue the three kidnapped women as soon as possible.



Photo by Jia Ting

I Could Swear It Moved Just Now

By Sun Ming

A young woman was scared to tears by this bronze man outside Beijing Guangdelou Theater in Qianmen on Tuesday.

"She cried. But you know, I just couldn't hold the pose in that tiring position forever," Li Qinghua, 22, a Qing Dynasty living statue, told

Beijing Today.

"The problem was she had just moved closer to me to investigate."

He said as a consolation, he invited her to take a picture, smiling together through the tears. Li said he can maintain a single posture for more than 20 minutes and that the body paint wasn't toxic.

Bureau Launches Legal Service Hotline Catering to Foreigners

By Li Lili/Su Wei

"Press '1', Jing Tai Lawyer's Office, press '2', Ke Hua Lawyer's Office..." mused the mechanical female voice seconds after callers press "4".

The new English language legal service has been launched by the Beijing Bureau of Justice.

Sixteen lawyers with fluent English offer six "148" legal offices.

The 1600148 service focuses on answering foreigners' legal questions about business and real estate.

"Around three foreigners call us a day," said Cao Yao, a lawyer in the Fa

Du Lawyer's Office, after three days of service.

"But I'm sure we will provide the best service to foreigners the same as we do for Chinese people."

The 148 hotline offers free legal advice across China.

The pronunciation of 148 in Chinese — "yao si ba" (一四八) is easy to remember as a homonym for "yao si fa" "要司法", meaning "wanting justice".

Counseling is free.

The charge is the same as a local call: 0.3 yuan a minute. 7:30 am-6 pm, Monday to Sunday. Call 1600148



Claudio Bonfatti holds up the harvest in one of his greenhouses.

Photo by Chen Shuyi

Farm Supplies Little Slice of Little Italy

By Ivy Zhang

There are cows, turkeys, horses, ducks, a swimming pool and a fishing pond. Drive north up the airport expressway, take the Beigao exit at the toll gate, a couple of turns later and a long line of white wooden fences mark the spot.

The sign says "Agrilandia", a 20-hectare Italian farm resort.

Owner Claudio Bonfatti, 47, used to work on a family farm, but came to China four years ago "following his heart" to live with Chinese wife Lu Hongwei.

The couple today have two daughters, Julia, 2½ and Luna, 5 months. He launched his dream in November 1999.

On the farm, Bonfatti, along with his 38 workers, work seven days a week, and 10 hours a day.

"I'm one of them," he says. "When I started this farm, I had the habit to do, not just talk."

"There's a conception here that the owner shouldn't work. It took time, but now I think it works. The owner is one of the group. No one is above everybody."

The farm grows 30 fruits and 20 vegetables. Produce includes plums, apricots, pears, grapes, tomatoes and zucchini.

"About 200 to 300 guests — half foreigners, half Chinese — come to visit the farm on weekends," says Bonfatti.

"In the farm restaurant, people can eat original food. It's not absolutely organic or green. But, it's originally green and naturally grown."

Bonfatti says he imported 20 seed varieties and tree buds from Italy and has developed new strains by grafting Chinese trees with Italian buds.

"We have many local best-seller vegetables," he says. "It's difficult to find them in this area. Only we have these vegetables, for instance, Rucola, the spicy wild lettuce."

It is fruit season. Every day, Bonfatti drives his white Citroen car to deliver more than 100 kilos of fruit and sauces produced on the farm. As a sideline, Bonfatti also runs the city's popular Peter Pan restaurant chain.

He supplies fruit and vegetables to Gisa, Mediterraneo, Assaggi and Sury restaurants and also various foreigner-friendly shops in the downtown area. Beijing has 18 real Italian restaurants in total, he says.

"We use our car as our truck," he says. "It looks like a 10-year-old car but actually it's only 1 year old."

"We plan to buy a small truck next month because the customers are increasing and we

need to supply more goods." Farming season starts in March and ends around November.

Speaking of the problems encountered at the farm, Bonfatti says they are short-handed when some farmers take sick leave, resulting in a change of plan or job delays.

But the biggest problem for the Italian is maternal in nature.

"A few days after we finished covering this area with the net, a big storm came. It took out and destroyed all our one-week's work."

"With people, you can always find a solution. But with nature, you can just try to prepare. You have to accept."

Address:

Agrilandia, Shilipu Village, Nanfaxin town, Shunyi District (顺义区南法信镇十里堡南果园)

Tel: 6947 3133 (English service available)

There's a Fistfight at the OK Saloon

By Su Wei

Six customers were beaten, three hospitalized in a Friday midnight bust-up with staff at the Yayuan Karaoke Parlor.

City media reported the story entirely using pseudonyms after those involved requested anonymity. *Beijing Today* is also using the pseudonyms.

Zhao Wei said his colleague, national trade newspaper reporter Chen Gang, went to Wujing Hospital having suffered broken fingers on his right hand. Another colleague, Wang Ming, had suffered two forehead wounds. Wang's wife Li Hong had a head wound and eardrum injuries.

Another reporter, Wu Qiang, although also injured and in need of hospital treatment, returned to finish the day's newspaper, Zhao said.

It began with a bill.

Wang Ming's wife Li Hong disputed the 380 yuan charge for 11 people for three hours consuming eight bottles of Yangjing beer.

She sought a discount. But Li alleges the waiter replied, "Why come here if you have no money?"

Irritated, Li ripped up the bill, according to Zhao Wei, one of the 11

involved.

But the boss of the karaoke parlor has another version.

"It is impossible for one of our waiters to talk so rudely," said Zhou Baocheng. He said he overheard the waiter say, "Sister, it's not so expensive." and "Sister, I cannot make the decision."

Li then allegedly said, "I can only give you 300 yuan. I will not even give you that."

"She then hit the chest of the waiter, and even ran to beat him in the corridor," said Zhou.

But all 11 guests — including a 13-year-old boy — deny this. "We know Li did not hit the waiter because the door was open and we could see," said Zhao Wei.

Zhao said more than 20 waiters in purple T-shirts rushed into the KTV room. One guy shouted, "What happened here?" and another ordered "Beat her!"

On-duty manager Song Xiaobo said, "When I entered the room upon hearing they wanted to talk with someone in charge, the woman grabbed my neck. My gold necklace was broken."

Four or five waiters surrounded one male, Lü Yan told *Beijing Today*, kicking and hitting him with beer bottles



Li Hong (left), Wang Ming (right), and their 13-year-old son, Xiao Dongyang.

Photo by Wang Xiaochen

and teacups.

According to the 11, the beating continued for about an hour even though they once offered to pay the bill and leave. Lü Yan claimed a manager-like-man took her identity card.

"I had no choice," she said. "We were too frightened. He forced us to write a statement taking responsibility for the incident."

Wu Qiang said he o snuck a mobile phone call to the police as he pretended to be relaxed, drinking beer at the bar.

Zhu Boli, political commissar of Wanshouli Police Substation, says it is not the right time to draw any conclusions about the case. The investigation is ongoing.

"In this case, both parties appear to be trying to cover something up," said Zhu.

Missing



Ding Zhongxing

the Martyr Mark

Ding Zhongxing denied revolutionary hero status because of his age

By Deng Fei / Wu Sanmeng / Chen Ying

The title of revolutionary martyr may have been given to Ding Zhongxing, a 13-year-old boy who died while saving another child's life two years ago, had he been over 18 at the time, explained the Hunan Provincial Government for not giving the boy the honor in March.

The boy's father, Ding Qingtao, has found that reason hard to swallow. "I just want to get a right evaluation of my son," he said, regarding his continuing campaign to have his son given the honorary title.

At noon of July 11, 2000, Ding Zhongxing, a grade-one middle school student at Hengyang Foreign Language School in Hunan Province, went to the banks of the Zhengshui River to collect samples for a biology project. Several elementary school students were playing nearby. One of them, Yang Zhonghua, fell into the river while trying to grab a dead fish floating on the surface of the water.

Hearing the boy's screams, Ding Zhongxing rushed over and jumped into the river after trying unsuccessfully to grab Yang's hand. Ding pushed Yang as close to the riverbank as he could, forgetting his inability to swim. The boy was able to grab an overhanging tree branch and pull himself to safety with his friends' assistance.

Meanwhile, Ding floated out into the middle of the river after pushing the boy. He slipped under the surface of the water and drowned.

Ding's act amazed local people and officials and won him citywide renown as a hero. Over the next year, he was given several posthumous honors and titles by local organizations and government bodies.

On September 27, 2000, the Hengyang Municipal Education Commission and the Communist Youth League Committee issued a document declaring Ding a "Heroic Teenager, who saved another without concern to himself," and the Hengyang Municipal Government called him "Hengyang's Outstanding Teenager" on June 1, 2001.

On the fifteenth of that month, the Shigu District People's Government of Hengyang decided to grant the title of revolutionary martyr to Ding.

In accordance with the fifth item of the third article of the "Revolutionary Martyr Commendation Ordinance", people who die in the act of protecting others or in saving the country's or communal property can be called revolutionary martyrs.

A two-month investigation of the case led the Hengyang Civil Affairs Bureau to believe Ding met the qualifications of a martyr and the Hengyang Municipal Government filed an application with the Hunan Province Government for the boy to be given the honorary title in December 2001.

The Hunan Province Civil Affairs Bureau, however, turned



Ding Qingtao, father of the heroic boy, is pushing the Hunan government to recognize his son as a martyr.

Photos provided by Deng Fei

down the application on the grounds that Ding was too young, adding that his act was motivated more out of instinct than revolutionary consciousness. The bureau also expressed fears that giving the title of martyr to Ding would provide the wrong kind of encouragement to other children.

Through scouring the Internet, Ding's family learned of similar cases in other provinces that had different outcomes. Thirteen-year-old Tang Jing of Beijing and 12-year-old Zhou Xia of Jiangsu Province have been recognized as martyrs after dying while saving others.

The Hengyang Municipal Government is now asking for instruction from the State Council's Law Office on whether there is an age limit for martyrs, while the Hunan Province Government has handed over Ding's case to the Ministry of Civil Affairs for the continuation of research.

Does Ding deserve the title of martyr? Would granting him that honor encourage children to save others' lives at the cost of their own welfare? Opinions follow:

Liang Yuan, assistant professor, Hunan University

Why shouldn't heroes be recognized as martyrs? It's not only a positive affirmation of their acts and a way of giving comfort to their families, but also a means to protect and uphold their spirit of unselfishness.

In Ding's case, some people may be confused and believe only adults can be called martyrs for their bravery. That could lead to fewer parents encouraging their children to help others. If children can't get proper encouragement and cultivation, how can adults expect teenagers to help others when they grow up?

The title of martyr is a posthumous honor, there is no money tied to this award. Would anyone jump into the water to save another in order to get the title of martyr, instead of out of some sense of moral consciousness?

Li Yuan, PhD, China Academy of Social Sciences

Age can't be taken as a standard in judging whether people qualify as martyrs. Not only children, but also adults, should learn from Ding's spirit. Many similar cases have happened in China in recent years. But that doesn't mean children should be encouraged to imitate Ding's act.

It's wrong to think one can only become a hero in this kind of way. What people should learn from is his spirit, but that takes rational instruction from teachers and parents. Certainly, children should develop some common sense about how to protect themselves while having the idea to help others.

Chen Huixia, teacher, Beijing Beihai Primary School

It's necessary to promote a spirit of unselfishness among children, but most children lack a sense of self-preservation. They are not the main body of society and shouldn't blindly get involved in situations they do not have the ability to handle.

For instance, Ding Zhongxing jumped into the water to rescue another child, though not knowing how to swim. His act was impulsive in some sense, but such spirit deserves to be encouraged. So I always worry about how to teach students about martyrs and heroes' spirits.

I once read an article in a newspaper that Jiang Huanghong, a ten-year-old boy from Sichuan Province, saved more than 30 of his neighbors trapped in a fire by cleverly finding an exit. He is also a young hero. I use this story in my classes.

During adolescence, the most important thing teenagers need to learn is how to cultivate a sense of self-protection. Projects and courses along this line, such as fire control and wildernesses survival classes, should be taught in schools.

Considering the generation gap in China, it's very im-

portant to have exchange between teachers and students. Some of my students' questions show today's teenagers don't think in traditional ways. They have their own ideas about society, though sometimes those ideas may be a bit extreme.

Rick Sjoquist, American, writer, consultant for People's Education Press

I don't think it's a matter of cultural difference that this boy chose to respond to this emergency. He probably just had a natural urge to want to do something to help. Perhaps he didn't even think about the fact he didn't know how to swim. Or perhaps he thought about it for a moment, but it wasn't something that he gave much thought to because he was more concerned about doing something to rescue the boy in the water.

In this case, it's a tragedy because the person who tried to rescue the boy ended up the victim himself. In the US, we would not call this person a martyr, because martyr is a word that we usually use only to describe people who have sacrificed their lives for some special cause like a political cause, religious belief or something else. For example, Martin Luther King, Jr. could be called a martyr to the cause of civil rights.

What we would call this boy is a hero. We probably wouldn't give him some special award or medal, there would more likely just be an article or two in local newspapers, maybe with his photograph.

We usually wouldn't have the government get involved. The community where the hero's family lives would do something to help the family and express their sorrow.

Schools offer classes about how to help people in different emergency situations, and usually cities and local communities offer free workshops and volunteer activities from time to time to help people learn useful skills like first aid or CPR.

FEEDBACK



Elegance was the name of the game at the national banquet held July 28 at the Beijing Hotel.

Photo by Qu Liyan

Formal Wear Required

By Chen Ying

As the thinning ranks of bangye (men who doff their shirts in the summer) on the streets testify, Beijingers are turning a sharper eye to the outward images.

Last week, *Beijing Today* ran an article about the national banquet held at the Beijing Hotel the evening of July 28 hosted by the Beijing Attire & Evening Banquet Cultural Communication Center, at which formal wear was required. The activity was a test run of a plan to hold such formal events at the hotel every weekend.

"I think women wearing evening dress can show their strikingly elegant and graceful bearing," said Liu Zhijun, general manager of the center.

Daxin, a prominent fabric and tailor shopping center on Dongsu Street in Dongcheng District, drew many guests of the event, who phoned in to the store or went in personally to choose materials and get measured for custom-made evening gowns, *qipao* (traditional Chinese-style dresses), suits and tuxedos.

Many tailors at the center have hung notices behind their counters to tell customers they offer clothing design and making services since the banquet. Tailored evening gowns made at the counters run an average of 1,000 yuan each.

Are Beijingers prepared to participate in formal events that require elegant dress? Opinions follow:

Liu Zhijun

Clothing and dress are very important in social intercourse. China has a long history of apparel culture. People were very particular about their dress in the past, but there was a blank space in people's care about their clothing in the 1960s and 1970s. The past few years have seen a fashion renaissance in China, which is clearly connected to the country's opening up to the outside world.

We just want to encourage people to improve their images and understand the importance of appearance through the activity.

Fashion designer, Daxin Clothing Shop, who requested anonymity

The huge number of calls we've

received show it's time we set up special services for people who want to order evening gowns or formal dresses. People now have more ways open to them to enjoy their spare time. This means they have more opportunities to attend formal events. More events are calling for people to have a better sense of fashion. This is one kind of civil development.

Middle aged woman, who requested anonymity

Women have more chances to show their beauty today. If I have a chance to participate in a formal event, I will dress very nicely. No matter what other people say, liking beauty isn't wrong in and of itself. Also, dressing well shows respect to others.

I remember I often went dancing when I was young. But I think Beijing is now undergoing a dance drought. Few people, especially young people, are enthusiastic about dancing, let alone going to parties where they have to dress up.

Wendy Liu, editor, Beijing Ringier International Advertisement Company

I think such activities are aimed solely at the upper class. Ordinary people don't have the time or energy to carefully select what to wear at such events. The main reason to attend this kind of activity is to meet other people and broaden one's circle of relations. So I think it's a good way for all kinds of people to mix and attract positive attention to themselves or their companies. Maybe that's why dress is so important at such occasions. At the time, it may be too early to expect ordinary people to be able to spend a lot of money to purchase fancy clothes.

Arianna Calza, Italian

In Italy, people like wearing formal or nice clothing if they go to parties or important meetings, though they still wear casual clothes during their daily lives.

Italian women buy nice dresses when they know they will have opportunities to wear them, and normally use such dresses many times. People certainly care about money, so they will only buy clothes they like. Of course, how a person dresses is important to the first impression they give to other people.

SOUND BITES

"We don't want to see that Taiwan compatriots would be led to disasters by those 'Taiwan independence' advocates."

— Lin Zhaochu, chairman of the All-China Federation of Returned Overseas Chinese, responding to an allegation made by Chen Shuibian, leader of the Taiwan authority, that Taiwan is "a country with independent sovereignty"

"This is another fundamental issue China expects to gradually resolve following its successful efforts to feed its huge population."

— Liu Zhifeng, vice-minister of Construction, regarding statistics that show China has reduced the number of urban households with insufficient living space to 1.56 million, just 1.1 percent of the total population

"America is back in the business of promoting open trade. I will use trade promotion authority aggressively to create more good jobs for American workers, more exports for American farmers, and higher living standards for American families."

— US President George W Bush signing a trade promotion law on Tuesday

"This is deadly serious stuff. He is not briefing about a cricket match. He is briefing about war options. It's the failure of American democracy. Before we go to war with Iraq, we must be able to determine that Iraq poses a threat to the national security of the US. Such a determination must be backed up with substantive fact."

— Former UN chief weapons inspector Scott Ritter after General Tommy Franks presented President George W Bush with refinements of a plan for attacking Iraq on Monday

By Chen Ying

They found her in the living room. She had swallowed a bottle of poison — DDVP, leaving behind a 14-year-old daughter and a bad-tempered alcoholic husband.

Some in the village of Huangtubedian in Changping District say she had a relationship with another man. Others say she was a good wife and a responsible mother.

She only said in her note, "this is for the sake of my daughter, the whole family and me."

But the decision of Da Yangma apparently did not help her family. Eight years later, daughter Juanzi followed suit.

"Mother, I miss you," she wrote. "I know I wronged you. But it is too late. For me, life is too hard..."

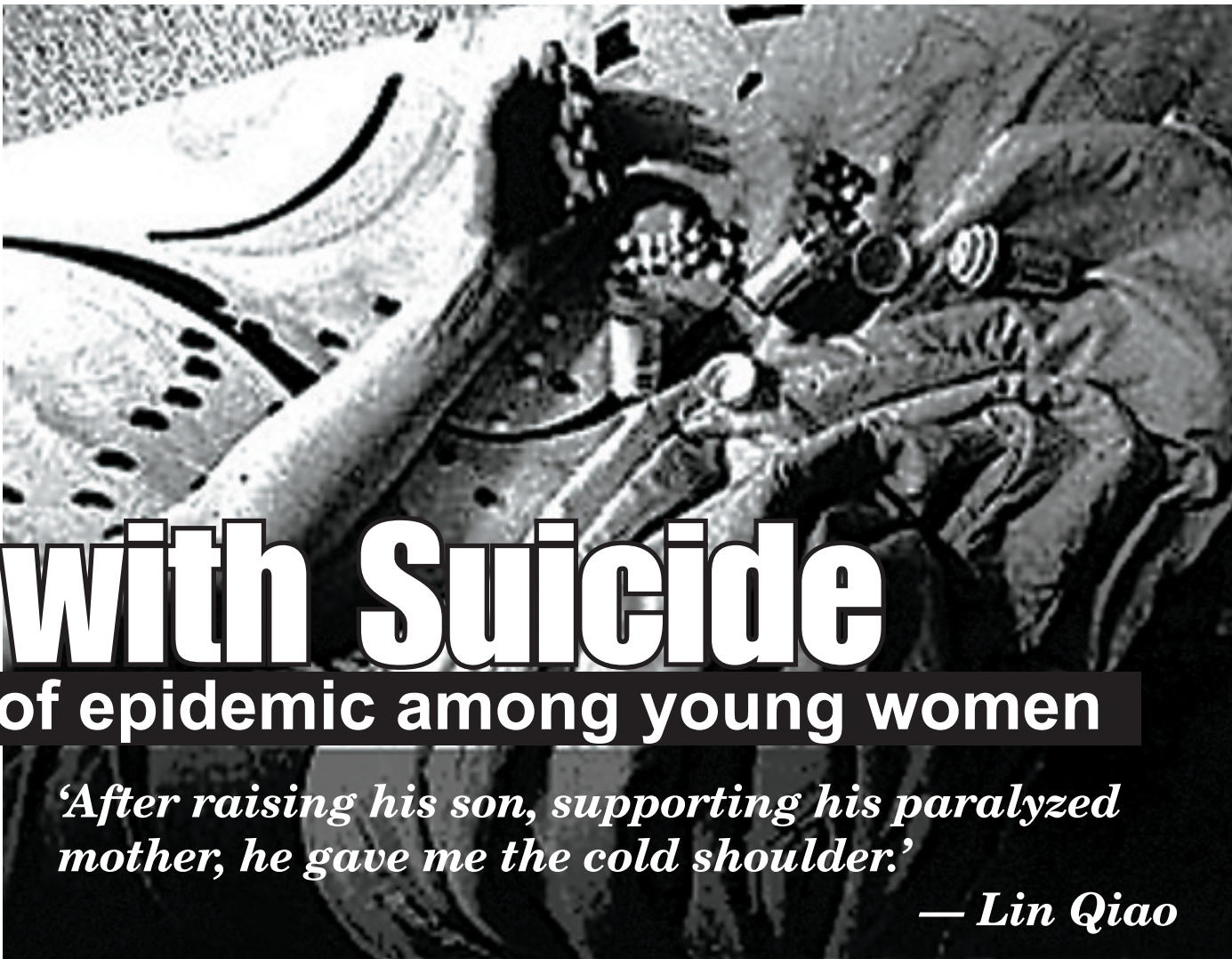
Some in the village say Juanzi is better off.

"The father is an animal," one observed.

Others see nothing strange in the second suicide. "It is a pity the child no longer had a mother," one concluded.

One month later in the same village, pregnant Wang Xiuling (pseudonym) also swallowed a bottle of poison.

But luckily — or unluckily, depending on where you stand — Wang was saved.



Love Affair with Suicide

Report explores causes of epidemic among young women

By Su Wei

Studies conducted by the Research Institute of Epidemic Disease Studies, Beijing Huilongguan Hospital, offer some insights into the phenomenon of Chinese women committing suicide.

Frequency

There is no exact figure made available to the media, but it is permissible to say women aged between 15 and 34 commit suicide at a "very high" rate.

The frequency of women committing suicide in China is around 26 percent higher than men each year.

Globally, women commit suicide four times less often than men. The acute disparity in China demands further study.

Traditional thinking plays a role.

"Committing suicide is still highly praised if it is to maintain social status and reputation, to show their deep feeling towards a person who suddenly died, or to try to pressurize those still alive," says Jia Xiaoming, a sociologist at Beijing University of Science and Technology.

"Society maintains committing suicide is not unreasonable.

"Women believe it is the last but most effective resort to protest or perhaps to avoid the unbearable reality.

"This is especially true for women kidnapped or sold, or bartered into a traditional arranged marriage by her family," she said.

Ideal

Chinese women are still impressed by an extreme traditional ideal, say researchers at the Research Institute of Epidemic Disease Studies.

"Too much emphasis is placed on the family, the husbands, and even the adult son. They sacrifice everything for the benefit of the family," says Zhang Yanping.

"The pursuit of loyalty to love directs women towards pessimistic endings — dying for love."

Zhang Darong, a psychologist at Beijing No.6 Hospital, concedes the theme of committing suicide is common in Chinese culture. "One core Chinese ideal may be a kind of pursuit of self-destruction," she says.

Some people may agree it sounds noble to sacrifice their life for a strong belief, such as a soldier jumping from a cliff to avoid capture.

The most popular love stories in China dabble with death themes — Liang Shanbo and Zhu Yingtai, the butterfly

lovers. In the story, young lovers become butterflies through death.

Poverty

With economic development, the difference between the rich and the poor sometimes seems to be growing. Women must struggle to avoid poverty. But if they fail, they may choose to avoid poverty permanently.

A Mrs. Wang of Wuwei, Gansu, whose full name did not appear in the report, was born into poverty.

She married to escape poverty, the report said.

But her first husband still led her into poverty. They had three children. The husband became a drug dealer, but was caught and sentenced to death.

Unable to raise the three children, Wang married again. The second husband was 30 years older. He died three

years later. Wang committed suicide.

Wang's story happens in the cities too. Wu Yujuan told *Beijing Today* she is still affected by the suicide of her friend, who died one year ago.

Her friend worked in a factory, but when the factory experienced economic difficulties, she was asked to go home.

Wu feels bitter about the pursuit of economic reform which abandons the weakest members of society. Social welfare reform lags too far behind state enterprise reform, she says.

"She changed too much after the enterprise collapsed," says Wu. "From a cadre to a jobless woman. She failed to keep a balanced, cool mind. Everything seemed tough to her.

"Several months before taking sleeping pills, she was fond of quoting, 'There is nothing real or false in this world. Everyone has the same destiny — one

handful of earth."

Since the early 1980s, more than 10 million young male laborers have come to the cities, leaving the responsibility of supporting the family to their wives.

Young women in rural areas often have to bear and raise a child, engage in agriculture and support the elderly in-laws.

"It is certain women are left facing more vulnerabilities, especially when they hear their lovers or husbands have another woman," says Li Xianyuan, another researcher of the institute.

Lin Qiao, 38, of Yishui, Hebei, told *Beijing Today* she was saved after taking sleeping pills.

"He wanted to divorce me. He says I am too old to help him. After raising his son, supporting his paralyzed mother, he gave me the cold shoulder," says Lin.

"Why must I suffer fate such as this?"

'After raising his son, supporting his paralyzed mother, he gave me the cold shoulder.'

— Lin Qiao

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Passengers See No Evil

Indifference to conductor's murder condemned

By Lu Dang / Ivy Zhang

The ashes of a bus conductor stabbed to death while on duty one month ago were placed in the Qile Cemetery in Nanchong, Sichuan Province last Friday. The ceremony lasted less than 10 minutes.

The tragedy occurred on July 8. Ren Yaoli, a 27-year-old bus conductor was stabbed eight times by a passenger when she demanded he purchase a ticket. The killer escaped after threatening the bus driver that he would kill him too if he did not stop the bus. None of the 20 odd passengers who witnessed the incident attempted to intervene and all left the scene when the bus stopped.

In the wake of the tragedy, the police took 22 hours to catch the murderer. On July 12, the Nanchong local government launched a debate titled "What does the July 8 case tell?"

However, by the time Ren's ashes were buried, none of the passengers who had witnessed the crime had come forward. Locals seem have lost interest in the debate.

Bloody killing on a bus

At 8 pm on July 8th, the No. 210 air-conditioned bus drove as usual from Five Star Garden to the Southwest Petroleum University in Nanchong city.

At the Tetai Market stop, a young man with a bandaged left hand wearing a dark striped T-shirt boarded. Ren, who had been working the route since 1997, approached the man and asked him to buy a one-yuan ticket.

The man handed five jiao (half a yuan) to Ren and then refused her request to make up the price. When Ren again pressed him to pay the full price, the man took out a 20-centimeter-long Tibetan-style knife and pointed it at Ren, shouting, "You want money? Do you want this?"

Ren took out her mobile phone and dialed 110 to call the police. "We have a passenger who refused to buy the ticket. He is holding a knife ..." Before Ren finished the sentence, the man stabbed Ren in the abdomen. "He stabbed me!" Ren said into the phone and the man stabbed her again.

Some passengers in the bus began to scream and some lowered their heads. But no one attempted to stop the violence.

The man kept shouting, "How dare you call the police!" and stabbed Ren around her mouth three times. She collapsed to the floor and the man stabbed her several more times in the breast and abdomen.

While this was going on, the driver, Tian Wei, accelerated towards a nearby police station. The man, guessing the driver's intention, leapt forward and threatened him with the knife, "Stop! Stop the bus! Otherwise, I'll kill you and all the passengers..." he shouted.

Tian could do nothing but stopped the bus. The man got off and disappeared into the darkness. The other passengers also took the chance to get off and dispersed.

Tian alone held the blood-covered Ren and rushed her to the hospital, however she died on the way.

The next day, local police arrested Zhang Jianguo at

his sister's home, and he confessed to the killing.

Zhang, 32, is a local vegetable vendor. On the afternoon of that day, he quarreled with his brother at the vegetable market of Shunqing district and cut off the thumb of his left hand in anger. In the evening, Zhang took the bus to his sister's home to seek comfort. It was on the way to her place that the incident occurred.

When asked why he did it, Zhang said, "I had no money. She dialed 110. I could do nothing but kill her."

Hot debate on cold hearts

The bloody case shocked the people of Nanchong. A month-long debate was initiated three days later by the local government through the media, centering around the fact that more than 20 passengers sat and did nothing as the tragedy unfolded - nobody offered a helping hand, nobody called the police and none came forward later as a witness.

By the end of the month, local newspapers, radio stations and television stations had received nearly a thousand letters and 500 calls.

Among them,
- 60 percent condemned the passengers for their lack of moral code and indifference.
- 25 percent said security should be enhanced to avoid the reoccurrence of such bloody cases.
- 10 percent said order on the bus was not kept well, which provided a chance for the killing.

- 5 percent questioned think the competence of the bus conductor need to be improved.
A majority of those who wrote or rang said that faced with such crimes, citizens should come forward to fight against the criminals, rather than being bystanders.

Meanwhile, a total of 650,000 yuan had been donated to the Nanchong "Act to defend justice" foundation by the end of last month. Ren's husband, Xie Bing, also received some 10,000-yuan donated by locals.

An end or not?

Xie Bing has not told his three-year-old son, Xie Difeng, how his mother died. When asked where his mother had gone, the boy answered, "to heaven."

Xie said he has not seen the killer, although he wants to because he is afraid he will not be able to control himself. But he also said he wants to know who the 20 passengers were and "ask them why they were so indifferent."

It was raining on the morning of August 2. Xie left his son at home and went to the cemetery.

The burial of Ren's ashes was a landmark in the case but the local media did not cover the event, according to *Beijing Youth Daily*.

The day after, the *Beijing Youth Daily* spoke randomly to 10 citizens in Nanchong and none knew about the burial. Regarding the case, some said it had happened long ago and there was no need to mention it again, while others said if they had been on the bus that day, they might not have come forward to stop the offender either.

(Sources: *Beijing Youth Daily*, *Beijing Daily*)



The father has not yet told his 2-year-old son about his mother's death.



Ren Yaoli with her son Xie Difeng

Photos by Lu Dang



Two-year-old Tan Xue, one of the Jiebei villagers suffering from arsenic poisoning.
Photos by Li Jia

Arsenic Poisoning in Hunan

By Li Jia / Ivy Zhang

Since mid-July, 76 villagers from Jiebei, in Hengyang county, Hunan Province have been treated for arsenic poisoning, a result of the local water supply contaminated from a privately operated smelter.

Water unfit to drink

Signs warning "Do Not Drink The Water" are prominently displayed beside the public taps in mountainous Jiebei town.

A child pointing to the nearby Dongjing pond told *Beijing Youth Daily*, "the pipe over the pond holds water flowing from the mountain, but as it goes through the 'poisoning' factory, it can't be drunk."

Once, the pond water was clear. People used it for drinking or to wash their faces. But now, it is muddy, with yellow and green layers of slime. Villagers have to go higher up the mountain to find unpolluted water.

Xu Weixiang was one of the first to show symptoms of arsenic poisoning. He says he used to be in excellent health, but started feeling unwell this May. "My skin turned black, and became swollen and itchy. Some parts were festered. My eyes were also swollen and I couldn't see clearly," Xu said. "I often felt nauseous and felt a burning sensation in my heart."

Xu went to the hospital in town, where he was told his symptoms were consistent with arsenic poisoning. "There are more than 100 people in my village who are in the same condition. Sixty to seventy have been confirmed to have arsenic poisoning."

In the village, many children have lost all their hair, a result of the high levels of arsenic in their systems.

Source of the pollution

The source of the poisoning is a smelter that was once part of the Red Star Porcelain Plant. Tan Youxian, deputy secretary of Jiebei town has been working at the site every day since the poisonings first came to light, directing workers to seal the arsenic-bearing rocks and tear down the workshop buildings.

The Red Star Porcelain Plant closed down in 1996. According to Tan, since then, the workshops have been rented by two villagers named Wang Xiuzhi and Lin Yuntian, but were left idle until November last year. At that time, without notifying the local government, the two subcontracted the buildings to another two locals Zhu Guangrong and Zhong Xinggui.

"Zhu and Zhong's business was illegal from the beginning, because they failed to get approval from the local government. I had no idea what they were doing until villagers started getting sick," he says.

After subcontracting the plant's workshops, Zhu purchased around 50 tons of arsenic mineral rock from Nan-

dan mine, Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region and burnt 33 tons of rocks for between November last year and this March, to produce a total of 7.4 tons of arsenic oxide.

Tan says the arsenic-rich rocks had been piled haphazardly in the open air, consequently whenever it rained, the poison would seep into the ground, polluting the local water supply.

Treatment

At the Hengyang City Vocational Hospital, about 20 villagers are still under observation and receiving treatment.

Since July 20, the hospital has been filled with patients suffering from arsenic poisoning. At the worst time, there were two patients per bed. Now most of the patients have been allowed to return home.

Fang Yunqi, a villager who worked at the mineral plant for nine days, said, "I felt awful. My heart felt burnt. I used to drink two thermos flasks of water every day. Now the arsenic level in my urine sample is 72 micro-grams per liter, my wife is 79 and my kid is 125. The doctor here said the normal standard is 17.8."

Many villagers rolled up their clothes to show reporters the marks on their skin left from sores. Six or seven children remain in the hospital, the youngest of which is just two. All of them have sores on their backs, necks,



Water in the village is polluted by arsenic from a nearby local smelter.

legs and arms. "It itches," said a two-year-old Tan Xue, pointing at his foot.

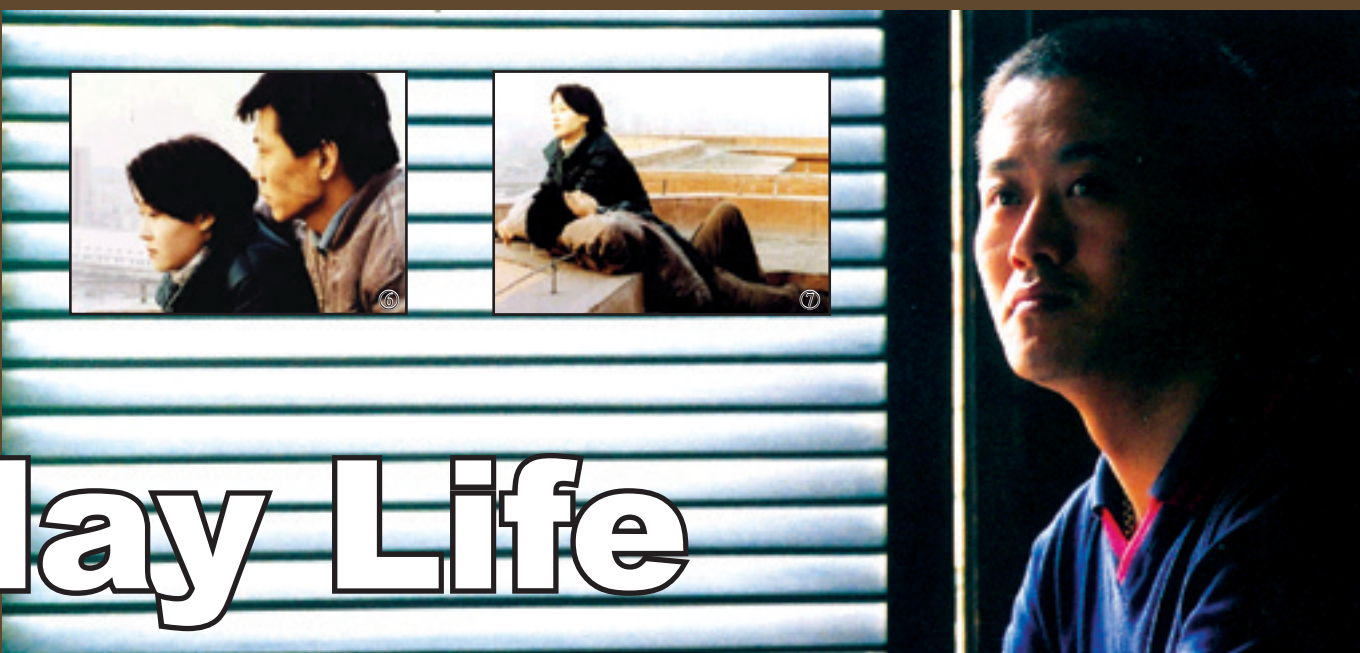
A nurse, who did not want to be named, said she has been working in the hospital for more than 10 years, but had never seen so many patients crowded in at one time.

Long Guoxiang, deputy secretary of Hengyang County, told *Beijing Youth Daily* that after examining urine samples of the villagers, 76 out of the total 221 were found to contain arsenic levels exceeding the safe limit.

"A majority of people exceed the limit, however most just suffered slight poisoning," Long said. "Nobody has died from the poison."

Hengyang county has reportedly allocated 100,000 yuan for treatment of the affected villagers.

Finding Beauty in Everyday Life



By Hu Xiaoli

Chen Mo and Meiting

16mm, color, 78 Min

Screenplay and direction by Liu Hao

In Beijing at the turn of the century, Meiting, a young girl who works in a beauty shop washing hair and giving head massages, loses her job and housing. She is taken in by a wandering flower-seller named Chen Mo. Both grew up as orphans and long for the love of a parent. Meiting suggests they make-believe. On Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays, Chen pretends to be Meiting's father and on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays, Meiting acts like a mother to Chen. Their little room is quickly filled with laughter, but the make-believe starts to ring false as time goes on. Meiting feels stifled by her claustrophobic surroundings and decides to leave. While out looking for Meiting, Chen is accidentally stabbed by a friend. Realizing she loves Chen, Meiting returns to their little room, where she finds him lying in bed, dying.

"Plain things around me were the real inspiration for this film"

"Why did you choose lower-class people to be the main characters in your film?" a bespectacled young man asks Liu Hao, director of *Chen Mo and Meiting* after an informal screening of the film in the Box Café near Tsinghua University in late July.

"Because I know them well," the director responds.

He started down the road towards the completion of the film on a cold day in Beijing during Spring Festival of 1997. That year, Liu didn't return to his hometown of Shanghai for the festival. "I was very depressed." Tired and blue, Liu went into a barbershop near his house for a haircut. The girl who washed his hair told him, "Don't think so much, just lean on me and take a nap. When you wake up, you will have completely forgotten your problems."

"I was really touched by her simple words, and they really clicked something in my mind," says Liu. He went straight home and started pounding out the first draft of *Chen Mo and Meiting*, basing the protagonist on the girl he had just met.

Shortly after his epiphany in the barbershop, Liu started paying close attention to some migrant flower-sellers wandering the streets. The contrast of their beautiful flowers and harsh lives struck him deeply. "These seemingly plain things around me were the real inspiration for this film," he says.

Shot on a shoestring budget of only 240,000 yuan, *Chen Mo and Meiting* was the surprise winner of the Best Asian Film award at the 2002 Berlin International Film Festival. Liu attributes the film's critical success to its sincerity. "My intention was to give a picture of authentic life, so during the shooting we used natural light, simultaneous sound recording, and actual locations. The style is very

realistic," he tells viewers at the post-screening meeting.

According to the festival's judges, this film was given the award, "for its masterly use of simple means to portray a profoundly moving relationship and emotional warmth despite the depressing environment around the two protagonists."

A crew that met hardship with friendship

Liu is joined at the post-screening party by some of the members of this crew for the film, and the continued camaraderie among them is clear. "I was really lucky to have such a wonderful crew," Liu says with pride.

Although the film was shot in 1999, talking about the film clearly still filled all the crew with a sense of excitement. Assistant director Yan Haobing describes the overall experience as "painful and cheerful. Everything was simple, including the equipment, our locations and our crew, but we all felt very happy, even through we shot during the coldest days of the Beijing winter."

The film's skeleton crew was made up of a mere nine members, meaning each of them had to fulfill several different roles. "For example, I had to be the clapper boy job when I was not acting," recounts Du Huanan, who played Meiting. "I really appreciated the atmosphere the director created. We could stop and discuss the film at any time during the shooting. Every one was completely free to express their opinions."

Wang Lingbo, the actor who portrayed Chen Mo, says, "Liu Hao was very serious about the film. Throughout the shoot, I had to wear only dirty clothes ever day. Once I went home by subway in my filthy outfit, and I was even questioned by a policeman in the train."

Cameraman Li Bingqiang describes Liu as being like an old brother to the crew: "He treated us like his brothers and sisters during the shooting and in real life." Liu maintains a silent smile while listening to his crew's comments. "It is I who should be happy to have all of them as my friends," he adds.

"I can always find beauty in the details of everyday life"

After attending the Berlin International Film Festival in February, Liu returned to his seven square meter basement apartment to start writing the script for his next film. Winning the prestigious award seems to have had little effect on his life. "I enjoy this kind of simple life style," he says.

Liu has been living in the small basement apartment for quite a long time. According to him, "There are many interesting people living here. Most of them are poor and work really hard, but that doesn't keep them from expressing love and finding romance."

The fact that he seems to have in no way lost his eye for easily



overlooked details shows the award has not gone to Liu's head. "My neighbor is a poor, middle-aged woman from the countryside. Several days ago, I started to notice there was always a small washbasin filled with water and a pack of milk outside her door. Later I discovered it was a way for her to give her daughter cold milk to drink during the summer because she doesn't have a refrigerator," he recalls.

Every day, outside of working on his script, he rides his shabby bicycle around the city's streets, watching ordinary people and their ordinary lives. "I have made friends with many people I have met while biking around, including a shoemaker, a rickshaw man and a newspaper seller," he said with clear pride. "I love to greet them and chat with them. What's funny is that none of them know what I do, they just think I'm some unemployed guy."

Liu has also become very well acquainted with a small restaurant near his home. When he goes there, which is often, eating is secondary to chatting with the cooks and wait staff. "They are all from Sichuan province, and they love to talk with me about happy things and problems in their lives." His conversations with the restaurant's employees have provided material for the script of his next film, *It Is Snowing*.

"Film is created by details, and I can always find beauty in the details of everyday life," he says.

Hard work and sacrifice pay off

Six years ago, at the age of 27, Liu made the momentous decision to start making films. His decision was based on his work and his love of movies.

At the time, he had been working as a reporter at the *Shanghai Labor Protection Newspaper* for several years, covering stories about workplace accidents and deaths. His direct view of tragedy inspired him to study life more carefully and ended up giving him a new angle on and appreciation of his own existence.

To wind down after work, he often went to an art-house cinema near his office. In film, he found an expression of the ideas that were milling around in his head. Inspired, he quit his job and jumped on a train, headed for the Beijing Film Academy.

Chen Mo and Meiting, Liu's directorial debut, was completed last year. He invested all of his savings in the production, and borrowed heavily from a friend. When shooting was over, he found he had no more money to finish postproduction of the film. During that time, he avoided his crew. "I was ashamed to see them, since the film had not been finished," Liu recalls. He saved up money by selling wall calendars, finally getting up enough cash to finance the postproduction. The entire process of beginning the shooting to the completion of the film ended up taking two years. "Many of my friends said I was taking too big a risk investing all my money in the film, but for me, it was definitely worth it," he says.

Biography: Liu Hao was born in Shanghai in 1969. He worked as a reporter at *Shanghai Labor Protection Newspaper* and *Hong Kong's Reform* magazine. In 1995, his music video *Drunk Concubine* won an award at the first Shanghai Local Opera Music Video Competition. In 1999, he graduated in directing from the Beijing Film Academy. *Chen Mo and Meiting* is his postdoctoral debut.

1. Liu attended the 2002 Berlin International Film Festival earlier this year.
2. The reunion of Liu and his film crew at the Box Café.
3. Liu is fond of wandering around Beijing's streets on his old bike.
4. This tiny basement apartment has been Liu's home for years.
5. Liu talks with a restaurant worker who is slated to play the main role in his next film.
- 6,7. Scenes from *Chen Mo and Meiting*

Photos by Zhuang Jian



Langfang Toutiao, circa 1910.



Qianshi Hutong is the narrowest hutong in Beijing.

Old Bazaar Awaits Facelift

By Zhao Pu

Dashila(大柵栏),the 500-year-old shopping district south of Tian'anmen Square is to be spruced up. Tenders are to be called for designs for the project this month, according to sources from the Xuanwu District government.

The ancient shopping street, traditionally one of the city's three main commercial centers, is famous for its "old brand shops," attracting tourists from all over the country and around the world.

It has seen many ups and downs over the past half millennium, surviving natural disasters and plundering invaders. Prospering for some 40 years after the founding of New China in 1949, the street fell into decline in the 1990s, failing to keep up with the growing and modernizing market.

Rebuilding the old-brand street

What shape the restoration will take is still undecided, but preservation of the old shopping street is the key task, say sources from the district government.

Specialist on the history and culture of Dashila, and deputy director of Xuanwu District Cultural Academy Li Jinlong believes the shopping street should be rebuilt into an old-brand street. "The key attraction of this street is its old brands. These golden names should be better preserved here," says Li.

"Dashila should maintain its idiosyncratic appeal, rather than be pulled into the market competition," he adds, suggesting that the newer shops selling low-quality products should be removed to make space for more old-brand shops.

"Beijing should have such an old shopping street, like Guanqian Street in Suzhou, Hefang Street in Hangzhou, and Chenghuangmiao in Shanghai. These old markets and bazaars are the



Dashila these days is a mix of famous old brands and newer, utilitarian shops.

Photos by Zhuang Jian

Centuries' old shopping street

Dashila dates back to the early Ming Dynasty (1368-1644), when four alleys, consisting of residences and shops, were built to the southwest of Qianmen Gate. During the Qing Dynasty (1644-1911), the area became a commercial zone. For security, fences were erected at the entrances and exits to these lanes, remaining in place until the 1930s. The area thus came to be known as Dashila, literally meaning "big fences."

According to a record from the late Qing Dynasty, there were some 80 old shops along the 370-meter-long street at that time. Among the best known of these are Tong Ren Tang Drugstore, which has manufactured pills, powders and ointments since 1669; Juyuan Hat Shop, now called Dongsheng Hat Shop, opened in 1811 specializ-

ing in officials hats and satin boots for the nobles; and Ruifuxiang Satin, Silk and Fur Shop, which opened in 1893.

During the reign of Emperor Guangxu (1875-1908), Empress Dowager Cixi ordered Tong Ren Tang to produce all the medicines used by the imperial court. Throughout the Qing Dynasty, Neiliansheng Shoemaker kept careful records of boot sizes and preferred styles of all the military and civil officials who shopped there. When an official wished to have a pair of boots made, he only had to send a note to the shop and a set of perfectly fitting footwear would be made to order.

In 1900, a fire that started in a drugstore destroyed the street. Twelve years later, it was plundered by the warlord, Cao Kun's army. Though most of the shops later resumed business, the glory days of the street did not return until its restoration after 1949.

A place rich with cultural flavor

As one of the few remaining vestiges of old Beijing, Dashila is an area of significant cultural value.

As well as shops, there were also a variety of entertainment venues, including teahouses, opera houses, bathhouses, and brothels. Temples, former residences of celebrities and other places of historical interest still survive around the area.

According to research by the cultural relics department of the local government, 120 historical sites in and around Dashila represent every architectural structural type that can be seen in the capital. Nearby Dashila, there used to be two small alleys where jade and silver was sold. The one selling jade, called Langfang Ertiao, is the only remaining hutong in Beijing paved with flagstones.

Qianshi Hutong, to the northeast of Dashila, is the narrowest hutong in Beijing, with a width of

just 40 centimeters. The smallest siheyuan, or courtyard house, once a silver workshop, can be found here, and Yipinxiang, the city's first bathhouse, was located here.

There used to be five opera houses along the street, entertaining royalty and the rich and famous; but only one of them — Guangdeyuan Opera House remains standing today. Daguanlou Cinema at the north end of Dashila, established in 1913, was the first cinema in Beijing.

The shopping street was also a site for the Lantern Festival celebration during the Qing Dynasty. On the evening of Lantern Festival, which falls on the 15th day of the first lunar month, all the shops in Dashila would hang lanterns from their gates and people would crowd onto the street to celebrate the festival and set off fireworks.

Decline in a new era

After 1949, Dashila Street saw a new era of prosperity. Alongside the old brands, new shops were established to cater to changing demands. In 1956, the Qianmen Women's Clothing Store opened at the suggestion of Premier Zhou Enlai. The Qianmen Children's Store opened soon after.

Food shops, bicycle stores, electric appliance stores and hotels appeared in the following years, and in 1980, renovations were made to the shopping street and it was transformed into a walking street.

As a combination of old brands and newer shops, Dashila, prospered until the early 1990s. Most Beijingers over the age of 20 have memories of shopping at Dashila before the 1990s, however in the relentless market competition fostered by the reform and opening up policy, Dashila has lost its place as the city's premier shopping street.

Today's Dashila draws mostly tourists with its history and old brands, but local people seldom shop at this once prosperous market.

Old Comics Boom in Market

By Zhao Pu

Six thousand yuan for a series of old comics! It may sound exorbitant, but at a corner of the Yimeijia Coin and Stamp Market near Yuetan, collectors and enthusiasts exchange old comics for sometimes extraordinary prices.

At one stand there are a total of 600 comic books for sale, including Chinese and western stories and fairy tales such as *Romance of the Three Kingdoms*, *Chronicle of the West Wing*, and *La Traviata*. Most cost one to five yuan each.

Generally speaking, the price of a set of old comics is decided by two major factors — its condition and its age. The most frequently seen old series are works from the 1970s and 1980s. These kinds generally cost several yuan each.

Works pre-dating the 1960s are keenly sought after, due to their scarcity. Comics of *Romance of the Three Kingdoms* printed in the 1950s cost 100 yuan for each little book, or 6,200 yuan for the full set of 62.

Comic books became widely popular in China in the 1970s, not only with children, but also among many adults. Though Japanese comics have gradually come to dominate the market, many people still hunt for the old Chinese comics as a connection with their childhood.



Comic books on sale at a bookstore.

Photo by Zhuang Jian

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By Zhu Lin

Art lovers and artists are there in force, of course, but it is children that dominate the Salvador Dalí exhibition at Beijing's China Millennium Monument Art Gallery, at least, on weekends.

"I've never seen this in the art galleries of any other country," said Lydie Attia, sales director of the Salvador Dalí Fine Art Gallery in Beijing, a shop selling Dalí replicas and souvenirs that is accompanying the exhibition on its China tour. The conduct of the children visiting the Dalí show seems closely linked to the appreciation level and tradition of valuing art of Chinese people.

Artistic environment destroyed

The Salvador Dalí Interactive Collection opened in Beijing on July 15. Since then, especially on weekends, groups of parents with children in tow have descended on the gallery in droves. Most of these children have been learning drawing at their kindergarten or preliminary school. They sit on the floor or on small chairs brought by their parents, and practice by copying Dalí sculptures and paintings.

The parents see it as good way of developing children's drawing skills, but the problem is, most of these children see little difference between an art gallery and a playground. The atmosphere of the gallery is completely destroyed for those who simply want to contemplate the artworks.

Last Saturday, a three-year-old boy urinated on the floor. With the constant ringing of mobile phones, and outraged parents quarrelling with the gallery staff when they have the temerity to stop their children from touching the sculptures, there is little hope of quiet enjoyment of the exhibition for art lovers.

"They run around. They touch and even beat the sculptures for fun. They drink and eat..." said Qiao Luqiang, sales manager of the Salvador Dalí Fine Art Gallery. "The art gallery becomes a supermarket where it seems to me full of tomatoes and potatoes!"

Clearly not children's stuff

Dalí's surrealist fantasies are difficult even for the adults to understand, let alone the kids. Copying *Unicorn*, one of

Dalí's most famous sculptures, symbolizing a man's sexual conquest of a woman, five-year-old Qing Ziping was confused. Looking at the falling blood and the naked woman under the unicorn's hoof, Qing said "What does that mean, mom?" His mother, a doctor, did not know how to explain the imagery to him.

But many parents do not care if their children can comprehend the work or not. "Of course my son doesn't understand what he's drawing," said Tong Liguang, six-year-old Tong Jizhou's father, "I just let him copy the lines for practicing basic skill." There were three finished copies in Jizhou's drawing book, and he was already tired. He was an obedient child, and did not ask questions like Qing Ziping. When asked what he was drawing,

"I'm very impressed by the parents' enthusiasm to educate their children, but actually masters like Dalí are not suitable for small children to copy," said Zhang Guilin, associate professor from the Central Academy of Fine Arts.

Due to a lack of artistic education, most of the parents have little knowledge and comprehen-

sion of Dalí's surrealist style and wild fantasy. But they are eager to let their children improve their drawing skill, so they just tell them to copy.

"The parents should lead the children to creative thinking, observing and feeling, instead of just letting them copy the artworks,"



Checking Out Dalí

Lack of Tradition of Valuing Art



Children copying Dalí's works



Photos by Lily / Lu Yanxia

he simply shook his head.

Lack of artistic tradition

"Many people don't know how to behave in an art gallery," said Qiao Luqiang, "And basically that's due to the lack of artistic tradition." Some of the parents do not carry the consciousness in mind that a gallery is a place to appreciate art. So they do not care if their children's behavior disturbs the artistic environment or not. And more importantly, they miss the opportunity to nurture their children's artistic appreciation.

said Peng De, an art critic. "The children's individuality will decrease in copying works like this. They keep copying, not knowing why. It's destructive of their artistic sensitivity." It is the same

with fostering art appreciation. When the children make noise or touch the sculptures, the parents rarely tell them to stop. In this way, they are not taught what is right or wrong, so they continue to behave in that way.

"In western countries, the galleries and museums have the age limit for audiences. The

parents don't bring such small children to an art gallery," Attia added, "And the parents will hire a baby sitter to take care of the child, and go to watch exhibitions by themselves. No photo taking, shouting, food, drinking or telephone ringing is allowed," she insisted. At the same time, museums organize special days for children.

Meanwhile schools provide a solid art education, and the children get an interactive education from the society around them. There is a well-established tradition of appreciating art, which is still at a starting point in China.

Social attention to valuing art needed

Chinese people's appreciation for classical music has developed significantly during the past decade, but fine art has been left behind. High-standard art exhibitions are by no means new, but few have contributed to telling the public how to appreciate art.

Masters of classical music like Li Delun and Zheng Xiaoying have contributed greatly to raising the level of appreciation for music, giving free lectures and transforming the spirit of music into simple language that everybody can understand. At the

same time, professors such as Zhou Guangren of the China Central Conservatory have made efforts to promote the quality and quantity of classical music concerts and activities in China. At concerts to introduce classical music to the public, they explain the nuance of appreciating music to the audiences. A new group of classical music fans have grown up under their dedicated teaching.

"There are few such people dedicated to public education in the fine arts circle," said Wang Yidong, manager of the China Millennium Monument Art Gallery. "There really needs to be more people devoted to this area, and there should be more attention from the media and government."

Early this year, an exhibition of Picasso prints was held in Beijing. Now Dalí's works will be on show till October 15. Chinese people have more and more chances to see exhibitions of works by international masters. But if the public's ability to value art does not improve, both the artistic and commercial value of the exhibitions will be lost.

Dissecting Personal Relationships with a Brush

By Yi He

Sun Huili's paintings reflect contemporary people's complex and subtle personal relationships, although she wishes it to be simpler. "I cannot help sighing when painting these works, that I myself am also one of these people," she said at the opening of the exhibition of her works at the New Millennium Art Center.

It is the second time for Sun, a graduate of the Central Academy of Fine Arts, to hold a solo exhibition. She says whatever people do, the innermost goal is for their own interests.

In her watercolor *Seek*, a black cat and a fish linger besides a human figure. "Personal relationships are like those between a cat and a fish," says Sun, "You might be the pair having nothing to do with each other. But at a certain moment, you will either attack or be attacked, like the cat and the fish."

As to her own character, Sun says she prefers a simpler relationship with other people around her. "But I see the reality, and cannot escape from the cat-and-fish relationship."

Another work, *Flowers in the Mirror*, also reveals this contradiction. In the painting, a woman looks at her image in the mirror. According to Sun, people's interest in themselves is much bigger than that in other people. But self-discovery cannot be more objective than other people's view.

"People's innermost compassion is directed towards themselves," she says, "That sounds selfish, but it's the truth. Sometimes I'm even sorry that I'm one of the selfish ones."

Where: the New Millennium Art Center (2F Diyang Tower, Xin 2, Dongsanhuan Beilu, Chaoyang District.

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Copperfield's Audience Spellbound

By Zhang Ran

David Copperfield has come and gone on a whirlwind, six-day, eight-performance visit to the capital following sell out shows in Shanghai, Guangzhou and Shenzhen.

Judging by their response, the 8,000 fans who filled the Capital Stadium to see the magician last Wednesday felt the 300 yuan and upward tickets were worth every fen.



The star made his entry on a motorcycle, and while there was little new in his act, Copperfield still managed to impress with his highly polished routine.

The last trick, and one of the highlights of the show, was to make 13 people randomly selected from the audience vanish from the stage simultaneously.

"This is a very difficult task and took many years to perfect without bringing harm to the participants," Copperfield told the audience.

On Sunday, he held a book signing for *The Tale of the Impossible*, a collection of short stories including his own story *Snow* at the Capital Stadium.



Pop Queen Delights Hometown Fans

By Zhang Ran

Pop star Na Ying returned to her hometown for a concert last Friday at the Wulihe Gymnasium in Shenyang, Liaoning Province.

The angelic-voiced singer had the audience in the palm of her hand even before she had opened her mouth, floating down to the stage in a heavenly white dress complete with two big wings.

The singer of *Yi Xiao Er Guo* and *Zheng Fu* delighted the audience with her impeccably choreographed dance steps.

Friend and fellow pop star Sun Nan also appeared during the concert for a duet with Na.

Couples Get Together for TV Productions

By Zhang Ran

Show-biz couples are lining up to make their own "joint venture" programs, following the successful example of the husband-and-wife team Zhang Guoli and Deng Jie with their Qing Dynasty emperor series.

Gu Yue, best known for his portrayals of Mao Zedong, is planning a collaboration with his wife Zhang Yan. "We have been dreaming of co-starring on the screen, and are now writing the 20 parts TV series *Mao Zedong and Song Qingling*, to mark the 110th anniversary of the birth of the two great leaders next year. Gu will act Mao and I will act Song," Zhang said.

Not to be out done, Tang Guoqiang, who played Emperor Yongzheng in *Yongzheng Empire*, is to host a documentary *Never to Compromise*, which will be produced by his wife Zhuang Li.

Cinema-goers Flock to Midnight Screening

By Zhang Ran

A midnight premiere at 26 cinemas around China netted 300,000 yuan for new action film *The Touch*, starring former Bond girl Michelle Yeoh last week.

The midnight launch, aimed at minimizing the effects of DVD piracy, proved a big hit with audiences cramming into cinemas to see the movie, which was also Yeoh's producing debut.

Tickets to the Beijing screening quickly sold out, and an argument developed between two fans over the last remaining one at Xindongan Cinema. Dozens of extra seats had to be brought in.

A popular marketing tool abroad, this was the first midnight premiere for cinemas in China.

Vice manager of Beijing Bona Culture Communication Yu Dong, in charge of distribution for the movie in China's mainland, said, "*The Touch* is the first try since the movie distri-



bution system reform. Each cinema chain selects one venue to show the movie at the same time all over the country, making the so-called 'midnight mission' against piracy."

The Touch, directed by Oscar winner Peter Pau and starring Yeoh and Hollywood hunk Ben Chaplin, mixes action, martial arts, romance and thriller genres in a tale about a family of acrobats and their search for a mystical Buddhist artifact. Audiences kept their seats until the end of the final credits and applauded loudly. The film has already won critical acclaim and is expected to be one of this summer's biggest hits.

WORLDWIDE



Michael Jackson Faces Cash Crunch

Life is getting rough for would-be King of Pop Michael Jackson. His tirade in July about mistreatment by Sony Music Entertainment and its chief Thomas Mottola, has more to do with his own ailing finances and career slump.

Jackson, 43, has earned half a billion dollars over his career, Forbes magazine estimates.

The bizarre star is in debt for about \$200 million he has borrowed to maintain his preference for \$10,000-a-night hotel suites at the Four Seasons, his \$50 million Neverland ranch and assorted perks.

Jackson needed a big hit with his latest album, *Invincible*. But in eight months it has sold just 6 million copies worldwide, a poor return for the \$25 million he spent to produce it (on top of Sony's \$5 million).

Ed Star Arrested on Crack Charge

Josh Randall, who plays Dr. Mike Burton on the NBC show *Ed*, has been charged with smoking crack cocaine in a Brooklyn park.

Police say Randall, a 30-year-old Manhattan resident, was smoking crack with a homeless man in the Commodore John Barry Park near the Brooklyn Navy Yard around 8:30 pm on July 31.

Randall and the 40-year-old homeless man have been charged with criminal possession of a controlled substance.

Calls to Randall's manager, agent, and a spokesman for *Ed* were not immediately returned.

(Associated Press)

A Sixth Sense for Fear

With the success of *The Sixth Sense*, M. Night Shyamalan joined the ranks of Hollywood's hottest directors. Now, he's back with a new supernatural thriller.

In *Signs*, opening on August 2, Mel Gibson plays a disillusioned minister who suddenly finds crop circles — a signal to many that space aliens are about to threaten humanity.

But *Signs* is much more than an update of HG Well's *War of the Worlds*, just as Shyamalan's *The Sixth Sense* is much more than a ghost story. He is a gifted storyteller who creates layered characters and piercing dialogue.

(ABC News)



Revellers at this year's Mardi Gras

Sydney Mardi Gras Calls in Administrators

The group behind Sydney's annual Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras has gone into voluntary administration after failing to find a last minute backer to pull it out from a mountain of debt.

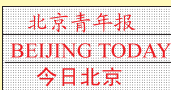
Now in its 26th year, the Sydney Mardi Gras is billed as the biggest gay pride event in the southern hemisphere.

This year, however, the event was hit by the global travel slump following the September 11 terrorist attacks. Lack of sponsors has added to the financial burden, as has the rising cost of liability insurance.

Earlier last week a mystery donor who had been promising an AU \$400,000 cash injection pulled out of talks leaving organizers with no alternative but to call in administrators, the final step before receivership.

(CNN News)

(Edited by Zhang Ran)



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Wheelbarrow table



Sculpture house

Bring a Ball of String

By Salinda

This labyrinthine location is a completely wooden world. Returning from the toilet, guests often have to ask their way back. The winding silkworm passages lead to a teahouse where lotus flowers adorn the entrance.

Push open its wooden door and take the wooden stairs to the basement. Wooden lamps light the passage.

The teahouse has four independent-functioning open rooms. In each corner, there are sculptures and oddities, each bizarre artistic handicrafts — a table made from wheelbarrow, an engraved lamp; liquor bottles set in holes that have been cut into a standing round wooden sculpture.

"With my work, the wood doesn't need to be designed, but the design depends on the wood," says Chen Zhengbin, manager

and designer of the Mu Dang Zhen Teahouse (木当枕).

Chen suggests guests sip tea in his workshop and eat dinner in the sculpture house.

"As each piece of wood has its own personal character, relatively speaking, each of my works has its own soul."

Chen says his teahouse is the first of its kind in Beijing.

"It is dedicated to exhibiting my work while guests enjoy their space. In a modern city, primitive handicrafts look a little odd."

Most of the wood comes from a 50-year-old pear tree he got from a village. The 300-square-meter house has 50 seats.

Tips: The mutton soup hot-pot is worth a try. Average price: 15-100 yuan.

Where: B1, 319, Xiyuan in Wangjingxincheng, Chaoyang District. **Open:** 11am-2pm. **Tel:** 6474 0362.



Wooden mystery

Photo provided by Chen Zhengbin



Photos by Li Shuzhuan

Shop Sells Story of Silk

By Salinda

Pictures on the wall along the passage exhibit the origins of silk from spinning wheels to weaving machines and looms.

This is no ordinary basement shop. Ji-anngan Silk Shop acts as a mini-museum exhibiting the origins, development and technological processing of silk.

Manager Ji Arong from Suzhou acts as a tourist guide for the interview. At the entrance are silkworms. "From silk egg to cocoon will experience five instars about seven weeks," Ji says.

"Then, we can draw silk from the cocoon" Ji points an embroidered dog. "A good product depends on the dog's eyes and tongue being true to life."

"Its three-dimensional effect comes from the embroidery's character. Almost any pattern or image can be produced with the skillful use of a needle."

The basement is arranged like a traditional street in Suzhou with gray roofs and white walls. Carpets, clothes, embroidery, quilts and quilts are on sale.

"Each fabric has its own characteristics."

Silk is so thin and ventilative that it is suited to clothes and quilts. Satin feels smooth and is fit for daily use. Brocade has bright colors proper for cheongsams."

Four workers demonstrate the making of a silk quilt. A silk quilt weighing 1.5 kilos needs 6,000-7,000 double-cocoons.

Jin says all his products come from a factory in Suzhou.

Where: the east side in the north gate of the Worker's Stadium, Chaoyang District.

Open: 8:30am-6: 30pm.

Tel: 6592 6902.

Artist Resolves to Revive Lost Glory

By Li Dan

Most Chinese have never heard of it.

Yet Changsha ceramics is one of four ancient kilns that exported abroad during the Tang Dynasty (618-907) — alongside Jindezhen in Jiangxi, Quyang in Hebei (Dingyao) and Linru in Henan (Ruyao).

Asleep more than 1,000 years, the Changsha ceramic (Changshayao, 长沙窑) kiln was unearthed in Shizhuhu (石渚湖), a village in the Changsha municipality of Hunan in 1952.

Opened on August 1 Yi Fan Ge (艺凡阁) gathers ceramics from Changsha made by 47-year-old ceramic artist Mao Jianxin, president of Hunan Ceramic Art Association.

There are more than 100 famous kilns in Chinese ceramic history. Changshayao is one of the oldest, dating from the early Tang. During the Tang Dynasty hundreds of kilns appeared in Changsha, all on a grand scale. Most ceramics were exported to Japan, East Asia and Europe.

Changsha was known for its short-bodied, sharp-spouted and straight, long-necked ceramics.

It reflected refinement and magnanimity, the symbol of a flourishing age, says Mao Jianxin. But at the end of the dynasty, the Yangtze River flooded and submerged all the kilns and thousands of finished articles of pottery.

This ancient earthenware inspires Mao. He enjoys his Hunan inheritance and combines it with his personal design.

"Ancient Changshayao's prosperity is passed. I hope my new Changshayao ceramics will open a great page again," says Mao.

Mao spends most of time in his studio in a village near Changsha. His works are transported by air to Beijing each week.

Where: Yi Fan Ge, 8 Jianneidajie, C 203, 2nd floor of COFCO Plaza, Chaoyang District.

Price: ceramic works at 20-30 yuan, pots at 800-3,000 yuan.

Open: 9am-9pm.

Tel: 8511 5018.



Faces by Mao Jianxin contains contradictory expressions



Pottery fish, the logo of Yi Fan Ge



A pot in traditional Changshayao style

Photos by Li Shuzhuan

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Business District Draws Domestic, International Players

By Wang Dandan
Experts from China and other countries will be invited to discuss the development of CBDs in the 21st century during a seminar from September 12 to 13 at Beijing Kerry Center.

Hoping to draw on other countries' successful experiences in constructing and developing their own central business districts, the Beijing Chaoyang Government, Beijing CBD Administration Committee, State Committee of Statis-

tics, State Ministry of Construction, State Ministry of Foreign Trade, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, Qinghua University and Renmin University will held the "Seminar on CBD's Development".

The event should also strengthen communication between Beijing and the rest of world in terms of design, planning, development, construction and materials related to the city's CBD.

According to the recent statistics from Beijing CBD Administration Committee, construction

design companies and real estate developers from China and abroad have set up shop in the capital's Central Business District (CBD) since the municipal government published the plans for the area at the First and Second Beijing Chaoyang International Business Conferences held in 2000 and 2001.

To date, around 2,075 enterprises have opened their doors in the CBD, 1,460 of which are domestic companies and 615 are foreign. Over 96 percent of available office

space in the district has already been rented at an average rate of around \$50 per square meter.

There are 14 real estate projects up for construction in the CBD, which will have a total area of over 3.3 million square meters and a combined cost of about 47 billion yuan.

Of these projects, seven will receive a total of 1.84 million yuan in foreign investment, accounting for 39 percent of total investment in the real estate industry in the district.

Rating Rents around the City

By Wang Dandan
Beijing's real estate market is marked by the highest rents in the entire country. According to research done by Beijing Weiye Real Estate, monthly rent for foreign-approved apartments comes in at an average of around one percent of an apartment's total sale price, while rent of common apartments are equivalent to around 0.5 percent of the apartments' sale price.

Top-level foreign apartment buildings, such as Beijing Kerry Center, China World Trade Center, Ascott and Donghuan Plaza, provide a wide range of housing service and their apartments have average rents of \$20-30 per square meter.

Rujingyuan Building, Qingjing Minghu Building and Huihao apartment are representative mid-level foreign-approved apartment complexes, that are well equipped and popular due to their foreigner-friendly atmospheres. Rent in such buildings averages around \$15-20

per square meter.

Most new foreign-approved apartment buildings are located in the center of the city and offer modern decorations and services, with rents of \$10-12 per square meter. Examples of these complexes are SOHO New Town and Sun 100.

Another option open to foreigners in Beijing is apartments that are not officially foreign-approved but have foreign renting certificates. Their total prices are much lower than those of officially foreign-approved apartments, leading to far cheaper rent rates of \$5-8 per square meter.

Finally, there are common apartments, the rents for which vary according to their locations and communities. However, they are normally far less expensive than the apartments mentioned above because of their inferior facilities and property management. The average monthly rent for a 100 square meter common apartment is about 2,500 - 3,000 yuan.



SOHO New Town is one of the new foreign-approved complexes to have opened downtown.

Prepare Your Home for a Perfect Showing

By Michele Glair
You never get a second chance to make a good first impression.

If you are planning to put your home on the real estate market this summer and it has the "lived-in" look, or needs a general sprucing up, consider a new trend called "home staging".

Staged homes, those redecorated and decluttered for a better presentation, generally sell faster and at higher prices.

The role of the professional home stager is to analyze a home's décor and make changes and updates to help make sure the home is sold.

Home staging starts with clearing clutter, packing personal items and rearranging furniture for a better presentation and can include fresh coats of paint, new carpeting and landscape changes or additions.

Since most prospective home-buyers make their decisions within five seconds of walking through your front door, you want to appeal to the widest possible range of people previewing your home and encourage buyers to imagine themselves living in the house.

Room editing
Rooms oftentimes get overcrowded with stuff. If you had planned on discarding any furnishings before moving, do it before your home goes on the market.

If you simply have too much furniture, move it to the basement, garage or put it in storage. This will free up the room and make it seem more spacious and airy — an appealing selling point.

Furniture arrangement
As in room editing, well-placed furnishings can also open up a room. Avoid lining furniture along all four walls. Try placing a piece or two on an angle. In the living areas, include an area for cozy conversation or an out-of-the-way corner for reading.

Clutter elimination
Since you want potential buyers to be noticing the house itself, and not your belongings, this is the perfect time for significant collections such as knick-knacks, trophies, and overstuffed book cases to be boxed up for the move.

Clear kitchen and bath countertops of small appliances, little jars, bottles, and tubes of stuff to create a feeling of spaciousness in a room.



Making scents
Just like certain smells can trigger memories in a person, the scent of your home can leave a lasting impression on a potential buyer.

For this reason, avoid cooking smelly foods such as fish, liver, garlic, onions, or anything fried or spicy before showing your home.

If weather permits, open windows and doors to let in some fresh air. During winter months, baking a frozen loaf of bread, cookies, or pie can fill your home with an inviting fragrance.

And though you never want to over-perfume your home, you may want to light a candle as a quick and aromatic remedy. Stay away from sharp floral scents and stick with a vanilla or cinnamon fragrance.

Lighting
Show your rooms in the best possible light...natural! If heavy drapes or curtains block the view, leave them open. The same goes for any kind of blind. Light makes a room seem bright and cheery.

Clean windows and screens, inside and out, to make a big impact on the light coming into a room.

If you have a room or two with dark walls or no windows, leave a few of the lights on at all times during showings.

If overhead lighting seems too stark, try just leaving on a lamp or two for drama.

Material things
Stained, dingy towels are a no-no for a home showing. In the kitchen and bath, consider setting out guest towels and soaps.

Inevitably, a visitor or two will be in need during the showing. Throw rugs and carpets should also be in good condition.

And if they are not completely necessary, they should be removed altogether. Never lay a rug over carpeting.

Tattered or worn bedspreads should be removed and beds should always be made.

Clean
There is nothing more appealing than a clean home. If you are not into cleaning, consider hiring a professional. Make a list for each room, paying particular attention to your homes entry, kitchen, and bath areas.

To be continued next week

Photos by Michele Glair

No Taxes Levied on Second-hand Homes

By Wang Dandan
The Beijing Tax Bureau has published a notice that starting August 1, 2002, no property taxes will be levied on individual owners of second-hand apartments or developers who sell such apartments.

According to the notice, villas are not included in this tax break and villa owners have to pay property taxes in keeping with the type of property right certificate they hold.

All apartment owners who want to sell their properties have to first apply to the local government for permission to do so.

Real Estate Round-up

By Wang Dandan

Sales of apartments, mostly common apartments, in 20 new complexes started in July, revealing four new market trends, according to statistics from Beijing Weiye Real Estate Consultancy Company. The Yindu Building and Yingu Building in the Zhongguancun area entered the market, bolstering the already fierce competition in the high-tech area.

Villa complexes become a focus of the market, with villas in the Xiangshan area gradually attracting increasing numbers of developers and buyers.

Common apartments situated outside the Fourth Ring Road have mushroomed. Finally, a growing number of developers, when constructing complexes such as Chengpin Garden, are trying to portray their projects as being ideal for the city's intellectual and cultural elite by doing things like setting up small libraries in their sales offices.

Project: New World Zhengren Building
Location: Chongwai Dajie, Chongwen District
Type: offices
Price: 11,000 yuan per square meter

Project: Yindu Building
Location: 36, Xituchenglu, Haidian District
Type: offices
Price: 12,000 yuan per square meter

Project: Yingu Building
Location: 10 Zhongguancunlu, Haidian District
Type: offices
Price: 12,500 yuan per square meter

Project: Guoying Garden
Location: opposite Beijing Qingniangong, east of the west Second Ring Road, Xicheng District
Type: apartments
Price: 9,300 yuan per square meter

Project: Rose Villas
Location: Badaling Expressway
Type: villas
Price: 3,480 yuan per square meter

Project: Saina Villas
Location: 2 Lishuiqiao Beili, Chaoyang District
Type: villas
Price: 1.36-3.3 million yuan per unit

Project: Xiangshan Villas
Location: 88 Xiangshan Nanlu, Haidian District
Type: villas
Price: 10,000 yuan per square meter

Project: Yindu Building
Location: 36, Xituchenglu, Haidian District
Type: foreign-approved apartments
Price: 7,200 - 8,000 yuan per square meter

Project: East Scene Garden
Location: beside Scitech Hotel, south of Chang'an Avenue, Jianguomenwai, Chaoyang District
Type: foreign-approved apartments
Price: 12,000 yuan per square meter

Project: Lanjue Garden
Location: north of Rome Garden, Huixinxijie, Chaoyang District
Type: foreign-approved apartments
Price: 8,500 yuan per square meter

Project: Wangzuo Building
Location: Guanghualu, Chaoyang District
Type: foreign-approved apartments
Price: \$2,200 per square meter

Project: UHN Garden
Location: Jing'an Zhuang, Chaoyang District
Type: top-level apartments
Price: 7,800 yuan per square meter

Project: Ouyuan Garden
Location: 18 Nanmaliandao, Xuanwu District
Type: apartments
Price: 5,600 yuan per square meter

Project: Beijing Youth Garden
Location: North of Beijing Conference Center, Chaoyang District
Type: apartments
Price: 4,650 yuan per square meter

Project: Huigu Garden
Location: north of Baoxingyuan, Wangjing, Chaoyang District
Type: apartments
Price: 5,300 yuan per square meter

Project: Gaoyuan Garden
Location: 13 Jingchang Expressway, Changping District
Type: apartments
Price: 3,180 yuan per square meter

Project: Baiwang Garden
Location: Nongdabeijie Nanlu, Haidian District
Type: apartments
Price: 5,500 yuan per square meter

Project: Qilin Garden
Location: 1 Xiaojiahe Dongcun, Haidian District
Type: apartments
Price: 5,600 yuan per square meter

Project: Yangguan Xinganxian Garden
Location: 8 Anyuan, Anhuibeili, Chaoyang District
Type: apartments
Price: 6,700 yuan per square meter

Project: Chengping Building
Location: South east corner of Sijiqingqiao, Zizhuyuanlu, Haidian District
Type: apartments
Price: 7,550 yuan per square meter

Project: Xingguang Garden
Location: 100 meters south of Xihongmenqiao, Daxing District
Type: apartments
Price: 4,650 yuan per square meter

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Activities

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Where: Beijing Friendship Association with Foreign Countries, Nanheyang Dajie (west of Wangfujing Dajie). **When:** August 17, 4-7 pm. **Admission:** 25 yuan. **Tel:** 8851 4913 (reservation).

YPHH German Food and Drink Night

Five glasses of German beer (weisse and/or bitburger, German BBQ dinner buffet, two schnapps, lucky draw and other entertainment.

Where: Schiller's 2. **When:** August 22. **Admission:** 150 yuan. **Reservation:** www.yphh.com

Lecture with Projection

Lecturer: Min Jie, who travelled around China from May 2000 and walked from Luguahu to Daocheng in October 2001.

Where: Xingshecongcong Bar, opposite the National Library, bus 320, 732 to Beitou (National Library). **When:** August 23, evening. **Tel:** 6846 3550.

Visit Beijing Zoo

Visit it and see how zoo keepers help pandas, tigers, hippos, and polar bears survive the summer.

Where: meet at the main entrance of Beijing Zoo at 8:50 am. **When:** August 11, 9-11:30 am. **Fee:** 30 yuan, 20 yuan for kids. **Tel:** 8851 4913.

Education

Four Australian Schools Hold Interviews in Beijing

Organized by IDP Billy Blue Graphic Design School, William Blue International Hotel Management School, White House Design Institute and JMC. Representative Graham Pickering will hold interviews in English for graduates from senior high school. Bring graduation certificate, school report and IELTS score. **Where:** Room 704, 7F, North Office Tower, New World Center, 3 Chongwenmen Dajie. **When:** August 10, 10-12 pm, 1:30-1:30 pm. **Tel:** 6708 2538 (Sharon Wang) for reservation.

Exhibitions



Xiqu figures series by Ding Liren

Review - Comprehensive Exhibition

Works by Xiao Feng, Huang Gang, Dong Ze, Zhu Xinyi, Zhu Zisu. Featuring water and ink paintings, oil paintings, etchings and installation art.

Xiao Feng's Light and Shadow series, Huang Gang's lacquer paintings, Dong Ze's water and ink paintings, Zhu Xinyi's installation art.

Where: Creation Gallery, north exit of Ritan Donglu, outside the northeast corner of Ritan Park. **When:** August 6-23, 10 am - 7 pm. **Admission:** free. **Tel:** 6506 7570.

Summer Oil Painting Exhibition

Works by Liu Chunming, Yang Yang, Wang Luxia, Li Li. **Where:** Qin Gallery, 1-1-E, Huaweili, Chaoyang District (north of Beijing Curio City). **When:** August 8-17. **Admission:** free. **Tel:** 8779 0461.

Art Exhibition

Etching works by Liu Chunming, Wang Lvxia, Wang Weixin, Lin Tong; heavy-colored paintings by Wang Luxia combine folk art and modern aesthetic; Li Li's traditional Chinese realistic paintings.

Where: Qin Gallery, 1-1-E, Huaweili, Chaoyang District (north of Beijing Curio City). **When:** August 8-17. **Admission:** free. **Tel:** 8779 0461.

Film Talk

Crying Woman

Directed by Liu Bingjian, starring Liao Qin, Wei Xingkun, 2002. When Wang Guixiang's husband is imprisoned, she becomes a professional mourner at funerals to make money to secure his release. On paying the prison warden the agreed sum, she is informed that her husband has been shot dead while attempting to escape. The director will be on hand for a discussion with the audience.

Where: The Loft, 4 Gongtibeilu, Chaoyang District (west of the Pacific Century Place). **When:** August 18, 2 pm. **Admission:** 10, 5 yuan students. **Tel:** 6506 5592.

DV Film Ms. Zhao (Zhao Xiao Jie)

Directed, written and shot by Wang Baomin, 92 minutes. This DV film was recently screened at the Beijing Broadcasting Institute and has been adapted according to audience suggestions. A story about a girl living in a closed small town, who tries to escape from her arranged marriage. Exhibition curator Zhu Qi will chair an discussion following the screening.

Where: The Loft. **When:** August 10, 7 pm. **Admission:** 20 yuan, 10 yuan for students. **Tel:** 6506 5592.

Food



Events held with magnificent background

Bring the World to Your Doorstep

The Hilton Beijing's convention and catering services promise extra care and attention. The Hilton Beijing will bring the world to special events and outdoor events. The team will open the doors to events at the Great Wall, the Forbidden City or the Summer Palace.

Where: Hilton Hotel Beijing. **Tel:** 6466 2288 ext. 7332.



Mooncakes at Jingguang Hotel

Mooncake

Delivery service to one location will be provided for any purchase more than 50 boxes (within the Third Ring Road). Company name and logo printed on package box for over 100 boxes, order three weeks in advance.

Where: Jingguang New World Hotel. Price: 105 yuan per box. **When:** now. **Tel:** 6597 8888 ext. 2116.

Hiking

Tiger Valley

Where: Changping County, north of Beijing. **When:** August 10, 8:30 am at the Lido outside Starbucks. **Return:** 4:30-5 pm.

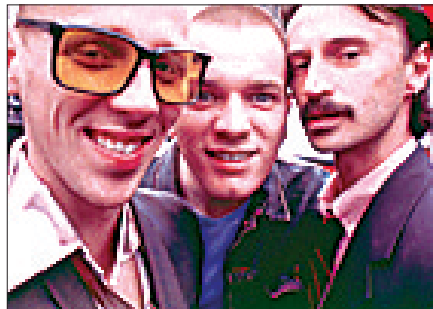
Route: Start from one of the Ming Tombs (Zhao Ling). The trail is flat to the village at the foot of a hill. Following the mountain trail up to the pass will take one and a half hours. **Email:** bjhikers@yahoo.co.uk

Movies

Spring in a Small Town

Directed by Tian Zhuangzhuang, 2002. Chinese with English subtitles.

Where: Dongchuang Cinema, 3 Xinzhongjie, Dongzhimenwai, subway or bus 24, 44, 815 to Dongzhimen. **When:** August 8, 8:30 pm. **Admission:** 30 yuan. **Tel:** 6415 7332.



Left to right, Ewen Bremner, Ewan McGregor and Robert Carlyle

Trainspotting

Directed by Danny Boyle, 1996. The hilarious, occasionally harrowing film about "well, you know what it's about..." Great soundtrack!

Where: Space for Imagination Coffee House, 5 Xiwangzhuang Xiaogu. **When:** August 10, 7 pm. **Admission:** 5 yuan. **Tel:** 6279 1280.

100 (Yi Bai Ge)

Directed by Teng Huatao, 2002. Cherry Lane Movies present Chinese movies with English subtitles at the Hilton Hotel. A funny and thoughtful portrait of two ordinary boys who decide to pay a great price in order to achieve a great goal.

Where: outdoor Fountain Terrace, Hilton Hotel Beijing, 1 Dongfang Lu, Dong-

sanhuan Beilu. **When:** August 9, 8:30 pm.

Admission: 50 yuan. **Tel:** 6461 5318/9.

Bichunmu and The Siren

Where: Press and Culture Dept of the Korean Embassy, 38 Xiaoyun Lu, Chaoyang District. **When:** August 9, 16, 5 pm. **Admission:** free. **Tel:** 8453 8112-4.



The Touch

Directed by Peter Pau, starring Michelle Yeoh, 2002. **Where:** cinemas around Beijing.



Spiderman

Peter Parker is a student having superhuman ability and he can cling to any surface vertically. **When:** August 7-31. **Where:** cinemas around Beijing.

Music

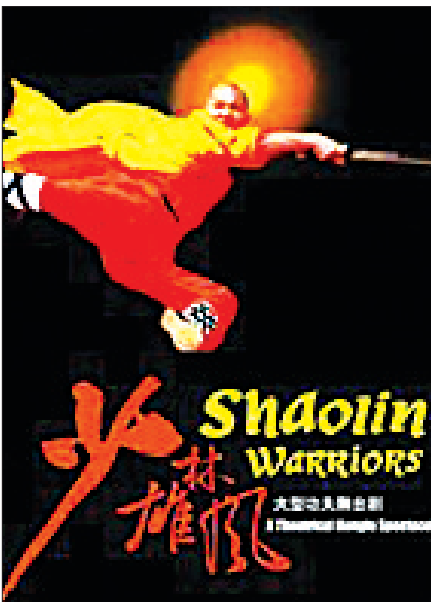


Asian Youth Orchestra

The 104 young men of the Asian Youth Orchestra represent the finest young musicians in Asian. Chosen through highly competitive auditions held throughout the region, they are among the best of the best from China, Chinese Taipei, Hong Kong, India, Indonesia, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam. They have performed before standing-room-only crowds in New York's Avery Fisher Hall at the Lincoln Center, at the White House, and at the United Nations headquarters in New York City.

Where: Poly Theatre. **When:** August 16, 17, 7:15 pm. **Admission:** 80-480 (VIP) yuan. **Ticket:** 8511 3198/3199.

Performance



Shaolin Warriors - Chinese Theatrical Kungfu Spectacular

As an old saying goes, "throughout the martial arts world, the sun never sets on the Shaolin Monastery." The 1,500-year-old Shaolin kungfu masters are acclaimed worldwide.

Where: Tianqiao Theater. **When:** August 21-25. **Admission:** 60-360 yuan.

Tel: 6528 7675/7750 ext. 198/508. **Tickets:** www.piao.com.cn/english



African Footprint Dance Troupe Visit Show

Where: Beizhan Theater. **When:** August 11, 7:30 pm. **Tel:** 6538 1383.

Reminders

Asian Youth Orchestra Tour 2002, Poly Theater, August 16, 17, 7:30 pm, 80-280 yuan, 480 yuan VIP, 6528 7675/7750 ext. 198/508.

Opening Ceremony of the Music Season of the China Philharmonic Orchestra, Poly Theater, August 27. www.piao.com.cn/english

Jade Dragon Snow Mountain Music Festival, Lijiang, Yunnan Province, August 17-18. 6528 7675/7750 ext. 198/508.

Sports

Football

Club Football Weekly Schedule. August 9, 8 pm, world cup highlights, Belgium vs Russia; 9:45 pm, Mexico vs Italy. August 10, 8 pm, premiership highlights, Manchester United vs Middlesbrough; 9:45 pm, premiership highlights, Liverpool vs Chelsea. August 11, 8 pm, premiership highlights, Newcastle vs Everton; 9:45 pm, Liverpool vs Newcastle.

Where: B10, Taiping, Chunxiu Lu, Dongzhimenwai Dajie, Chaoyang District. **When:** August 9-11. **Tel:** 6417 0497.

First Anniversary of Evolution Fitness

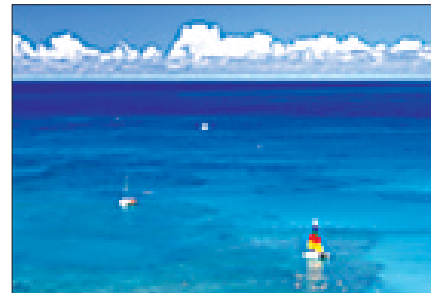
Special activities: eight-hour aerobics marathon, swimming competition, diving trial and games, free fitness assessment. Membership deals, no joining fees for six months or one-year memberships, members who bring three friends along get one free T-shirt, various gifts.

Where: Dabei Property Center, Chaoyang District (400 meters south of Motorola Building). **When:** August 16-19. **Tel:** 6567 0266.



Poster of the first anniversary of Evolution Fitness Center

Summer Activities



Longqingxia

Known as the small Three Gorges, Longqingxia is known for its unusual mountains.

How to get there: Madianqiao-Badaling Expressway, Jiangchang Highway. Bus 919, 920 or No. 8 Tour Bus. Admission: 35 yuan. Tel: 6919 1020.

Chengde Summer Resort

How to get there: trains: 1713, 2189, 2215, 4413, 7135, 7155, K711. Long distance buses: Dongzhimen Long Distance Bus Station, 6467 4995; Xizhimen, 6218 3453; Jiulongshan, 6776 2443; Guangqumen, 6771 7622. Driving: Beijing-Chengde Expressway, 240 kilometers from Beijing.

Beidaihe

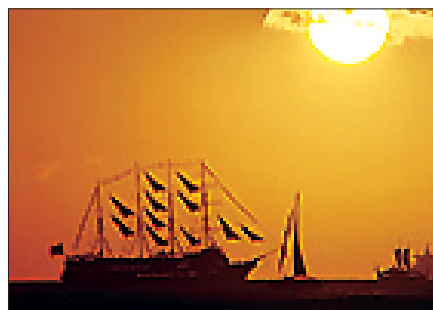
Almost the most famous summer scenic spot, ideal for weekend yet. **Trains:** 1301, 4495, K27, T11, T225,



T501, T509. **Long distances buses:** Lizeqiao, 6340 3408; Jiulongshan, 6776 2443. **Driving:** Beidaihe exit at Beijing-Shenyang Expressway.

Huludao

Known as "Pearl of West in Liaoning Province," Huludao is famous for its hot spring water. **Trains:** 1467, 2589, K125, K127, K265, L183, L423. **Driving:** Xingcheng exit at Beijing-Shenyang Expressway.



Swimming Pools in Beijing

Silver Olive Sports World Eight-lane 50x25 meters international standard swimming pool, equipped with two sauna baths.

Add: 40 Liangmahe Lu, 1 kilometer east of Lufthansa Center. **Tel:** 6466 3311 ext. 3181, 136 01327167.

Yifangyuan Sports and Fitness Center

Add: A12, Chengshousi Lu, Fengtai District. **Open:** 6 am - 12 am. **Price:** 30 yuan, 10 yuan for children lower than 1.1 meter. **Tel:** 6768 6118.

Shijingshan Amusement Park

Add: 100 meters north of the subway station. **Price:** 10 yuan. **Tel:** 6888 7879.

Sigma Building

Add: 49 Zhichun Lu, Haidian District. **Open:** 7 am - 10:30 pm on weekdays and 9 am - 8 pm on weekends. **Price:** 75 yuan. **Tel:** 8809 6699.

Wedding Show

2002 China International Wedding Show

The beauty of Chinese and western weddings. Fashion Show: US Wedding Gowns by Private Label by G, Bridal Jewelry by Diamond, Chinese outfits by Gulin and Men's Attire. Workshops: Bridal Jewelry, Honeymoon and Wedding Planning, Love Kitchen, Health and Fitness and Bridal Beauty.

Where: Kempinski Hotel, Beijing Lufthansa. **When:** September 7. Preview dinner, An Intimate Italian Dinner, August 17, 258 yuan per person, 500 yuan per couple. **Tel:** 6522 9988 ext. 6662. Fashion Show & Workshops tickets: 6407 4602. **Fashion Show Dinner:** 330 yuan per person, 600 yuan per couple. **Tickets:** Kempinski from 15 August or wedding-planning@xiyan.com or visit http://www.xianzai.com.cn/wedding/

Weather

Friday August 9 Cloudy to clear Max: 32C. Min: 21C.

Saturday August 10 Clear to cloudy Max: 34C. Min: 22C.

Sunday August 11 Clear to cloudy Max: 33C. Min: 21C.

Monday August 12 Clear to cloudy Max: 34C. Min: 22C.

Tuesday August 13 Clear to cloudy Max: 32C. Min: 22C.

Wednesday August 14 Cloudy to overcast Max: 31C. Min: 23C.

Thursday August 15 Overcast to cloudy Max: 30C. Min: 23C.

We are glad to receive your feedback. We will print employment, language exchange and accommodation info for individuals. Feel free to email us at bjtodayinfo@ynet.com or call 6590 2520.

By Priscilla

Leisurely Getaway



Sanjiadian Reservoir



The lanterns light the way at Cuandixia

From: Sanjiadian Reservoir
To: Cuandixia ancient village
Via: Yongding River valley in
Mentougou District

Village Offers Night on Imperial Tiles

Country folk welcome city guests to bed and breakfast by cottage factories

By Jiang Zhong
They collect water in yellow calabashes, green oil barrels, metal buckets, 1.5-liter and 3-liter Pepsi, Fanta, Sprite and Coca-Cola bottles. A 5-liter bottle fills in three minutes. The spring water is led downhill through bamboo pipes made by monks more than a century ago.

Mentougou mountain springs of the Sanjiadian (三家店) Reservoir have supplied water to villagers for 150 years.

Glazed tiles were the flagship products of this area during the Qing Dynasty (1644-1911). The tiles used in the construction of the Summer Palace were supplied by the Zhaos, owners of the glazed tile factory.

Wang Xinmin, a retired worker at the factory, comes here to get water every two weeks.

“But the industrial pollution of glazed tile manufacturing contaminated the air and water supply of the area as well,” he says. “Many locals suffered diseases caused by the water pollution. Some even died.”

Monks high up in the mountains have never suffered. They generously channeled their water to the foot of the mountain for convenient collection.

The government today says the water is now safe to drink. But for some reason, the locals never quit going to collect the spring water.

The reservoir supplies water to the most prosperous areas of Mentougou District. Liuliqu (琉璃渠 Glazed Canal) Village here is worth a visit. The Zhaos constructed a tea shelter here for Buddhists to worship.

After the reservoir, Yongding (永定) River offers attractions en route. A road sign near Junxiang (军响) Village indicates deer crossing. Indeed, the Xihulin (西胡林) Deer Garden in picturesque Xihulin villages has a 200-meter hill that isolates the garden from the outside world.

Ancient pines and the scent of burning hay lend the garden a mysterious atmosphere, reminiscent of a Chinese fairy tale. The pilose antler of a young deer is one of the most important ingredients



The old Cuandixia windlass still works today.

Photos by Du Jialin



Cuandixia residence doorway view



Walking across the old Yongding River bridges is forbidden in the rainy season.



10,000 yuan each



Cuandixia Village

of Chinese medicine. Supplying Tong Ren Tang (同仁堂), a Chinese medicine supplier, the garden has 180 deer.

“You can buy one for 10,000 yuan and take it home,” says Song Mengqing, manager.

Travelers can witness the work procedure here, even how workers cut off the pilose antlers, a relatively pain-free procedure.

“We must cut off the antlers of the deer before they ossify. Hard bones are useless for the pharmacy.”

Each deer produces one pair of antlers every two months.

Cuandixia (爨底下) Village, the final stop of the trip, comes soon after the deer garden.

A ticket office has been set up at the village entrance. “It’s not a smart idea,” says Liu Heying, a local villager. “The tourists might have the feeling locals like being treated like animals in the zoo.”

“We would rather invite travelers to drink tea or try local dishes at our homes. We also hope they will look on us as friends.”

Liu has conducted improvements to his house recently. The village has some 600 houses—for 40 residents.

Four-fifths have been vacant for some 150 years. The locks of the houses have rotted with the weather.

Cuandixia was once an important town during the Qing Dynasty (1644-1911). Carts here were daubed with the complicated Chinese character 爨 “cuan”, symbol of the village. Goods were then shipped directly to the Forbidden City.

“Few merchants had the chance of supplying the imperial family, and even fewer were bestowed with the right to send goods straight into the Forbidden City,” says Liu.

Although dilapidated, stone carvings on the residences remind visitors of the prosperity of old. Some interesting Qing Dynasty graffiti can be seen on the walls of other family homes.

Rooms with stone beds, ancient toilets, old furniture, cobwebs and dust apparently await the return of their owner. The village temple lies in the mountainside. A tall maidenhair tree guards the entrance to the courtyard housing the halls. From there, the whole village can be squeezed into a viewfinder.

Tips:

- Families of Cuandixia offer local dishes and teas.
- Between the deer garden and Cuandixia Village, Longmenjian (龙门涧) Scenic Spot and the even older Yanhecheng (沿河城) Village should be included in a two-day plan.
- The journey is also a scenic route.

Admission for Cuandixia: 20 yuan

Outdoor Actions



Sixty fishing rods and not one fish today

Photos by Jia Sen

Men Fish for Survival Test

By Jiang Zhong
Long Yunhu, a retired CAAC (Civil Aviation Administration of China) staff, has been fishing at Shachang (沙厂) Reservoir of Miyun District since early June.

“I will not go home until October,” he says.

A few anglers have lined hundreds of rods along the reservoir bank.

“We have moved a gas cooker here. But the shortage of fresh vegetables and fruits has annoyed us a long time.”

Long’s wife Li Xin sometimes brings vegetables and fruit.

“It is impossible for her to carry a heavy load,” says Long. “I like watermelon, but I have asked her never to bring one to me. She has to walk 10 kilometers in the mountains after getting off the bus at Shachang Village.”

Vegetables are more important to Long and other castaways. They dig holes in the beach to store the vegetables.

“The vegetables can be kept fresh longer this way. Sometimes, we throw away the rotten tomatoes from the top, but then we suddenly find good ones at the bottom of the hole again. We cut out the rotten half and keep the better half.”

Another problem for Long is he never eats fish.

“Fish makes me vomit,” says the fisherman. “That’s really a big problem. I have to take much more canned food with me besides my 60 fishing rods, tents, accessories and bait weighing some 50 kilograms.”

The recent rain has compromised Long’s catch.

“I have hooked only three fishes this week. I hope conditions will improve next week.”

One of Long’s companions, Chang Li, stays even longer by the reservoir. He has employed two locals to watch over his fishing spot and tents while he goes back to the office.

Showing off his sunburnt skin, Long says, “I could avoid all this suffering if I stayed in the air-conditioned house. But I will also miss the cool breeze off the water surface.”

Getting to Shachang Reservoir: Bus from Dongzhimen to Miyun. Taxi to Yangshanqiao (bridge 羊山桥 20 kilometers, 30 yuan). Walk along the mud road after the bridge, turn left whenever the road branches (15 kilometers, two hours).

Tips: Shops in Shachang Village (three kilometers from the reservoir) offer beer and beverages cooled in spring water. The temperature can drop steeply at night.



Anglers do not leave Shachang Reservoir until October.

Chestnut Splendor at Primitive Village

By Yang Yang
Four hundred and fifty years ago, one of the troops of the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644) planted Chinese chestnuts around the Great Wall passes in Huairou.

Descendants of the soldiers have kept planting chestnuts and improving their flavor. In late August, the Yuran Primitive Tribe Park (愉然原始部落) of Huairou offers a chance to cherish the nuts.

Tourists can pick as many chestnuts as they like for free in the orchard. Surrounding the chestnut garden, the savage life of primitive tribes is also reproduced.

Tourists can participate in catching fish with primitive tools or spend a leisurely afternoon in the tribe’s village, watching how ancient people made pots adorned with mysterious totems.

Getting to the Primitive Tribe Park: Bus 916 from Dongzhimen to Huairou, one more bus to the Hongluo (红螺) Temple.

Admission: 20 yuan

Tips: the park is surrounded by historical attractions. Among them, Hongluo Temple is the most famous. The Song Dynasty tomb in the backyard of the temple and the other two outside the temple are visited by lovers of archeology.

The Hongluohu (Hongluo Lake) Park offers local dishes and accommodation on the water.

Admission for the Hongluo Temple: 30 yuan

Accommodation on the water: 50 yuan one night

